



Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP)

COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING MATERIAL

(STUDENT GUIDE)

FOR

ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICES (ACS)

(IT/ITES SECTOR)

**Finance Division, Ministry of Finance Government of
the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

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The Competency Standards for **Advanced Customer Service (ACS)** is a document for the development of curricula, teaching and learning materials, and assessment tools. It also serves as the document for providing trainings consistent with the requirement of industry in order for individuals who passed through the set standard via assessment would be qualified and settled for a relevant job.

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How to Use this Competency-based Learning Materials

Welcome to the competency-based learning material for **Advanced Customer Service (ACS)** for use in IT/ITES Sector works. These modules contain training materials and learning activities for you to complete in order to become competent and qualified as a skilled worker.

There are **four (4) modules** that make up this course which comprises the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to become a skilled worker including:

- 1. Demonstrate Knowledge on Advanced Customer Service.**
- 2. Lead and Manage Team for Contact Center.**
- 3. Operate Contact Center Processes.**
- 4. Manage & Track the Team Performance.**

As a learner, you will be required to complete a series of activities in order to achieve each learning outcome of the module. These activities may be completed as part of structured classroom activities or simulated workplace demonstrations.

These activities will also require you to complete associated learning and practice activities in order to gain the skills and knowledge needed to achieve the learning outcomes. You should refer to **Learning Activity** pages of each module to know these quence of learning tasks and the appropriate resources to use for each task.















This page will serve as the road map towards the achievement of competence. If you read the **Information Sheets**, these will give you an understanding of the work, and why things are done the way they are. Once you have finished reading the Information Sheets, you will then be required to complete the **Self-Check Quizzes**.

The self-check quizzes follow the Information Sheets in this learning guide. Completing the self-check quizzes will help you know how you are progressing. To check your knowledge after completion of the Self- Check Quizzes, you can review the **Answer Key** at the end of each module.

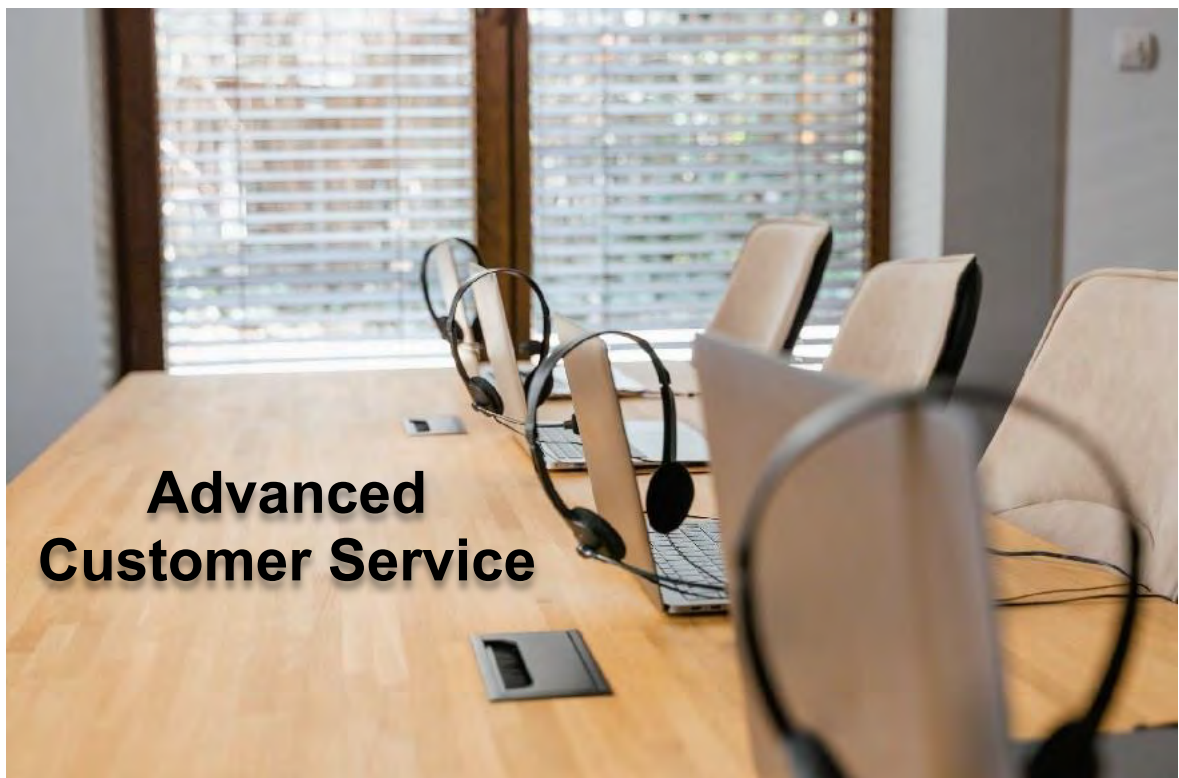
You are required to complete all activities as directed in the **Learning Activity and Information Sheet**. This is where you will apply your newly acquired knowledge while developing new skills. When working high emphasis should be laid on safety requirements. You will be encouraged to raise relevant queries or ask the facilitator for assistance as required.

When you have completed all the tasks required in this learning guide, formal assessment will be scheduled to officially evaluate if you have achieved competency of the specified learning outcomes and are ready for the next task.

List of Icons

Icon Name	Icon
Module content	
Learning outcomes	
Performance criteria	
Contents	
Assessment criteria	
Resources required	
Information sheet	
Self-check Quiz	
Answer key	
Activity	
Video reference	
Learner job sheet	
Assessment plan	
Review of competency	

Module 1: Demonstrate Knowledge on Advanced Customer Service



Module 1: Demonstrate Knowledge on Advanced Customer Service



MODULE CONTENT

Module Descriptor: This unit covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to demonstrate knowledge on advanced customer service. It specifically includes illustrating concept of Advanced Customer Services (ACS), interpreting contact center structure and functions, and interpreting customer service leadership.

Nominal Duration: 60 hours



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this module, trainee/student will be able to:

- 1.1 Illustrate concept of Advanced Customer Services (ACS).
- 1.2 Interpret contact center structure and functions.
- 1.3 Interpret customer service leadership.



PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- 1.1.1 Elements of advanced customer services are explained.
- 1.1.2 Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) in customer services is defined.
- 1.1.3 Target Customers and customers' needs are interpreted.
- 1.1.4 Customer satisfaction metrics in contact center service is defined.
- 1.1.5 The opportunities to increase customer expectations are identified.

- 1.2.1 Contact Center components are described.
- 1.2.2 Organizational structure is illustrated.
- 1.2.3 Contact Center setup requirements are identified.
- 1.2.4 Contact Center Process Blueprint is expressed.
- 1.2.5 Service levels of a Contact Center is explained.
- 1.2.6 Contact Center matrices/KPIs are described.

- 1.3.1 Traits of a leader are interpreted.
- 1.3.2 Role and responsibilities of team leader are described.
- 1.3.3 3-P operational framework is interpreted.
- 1.3.4 Procedures to develop capacity of a team leader are explained.



Learning Outcome 1.1 - Illustrate concept of Advanced Customer Services (ACS).



CONTENTS:

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Understanding Different Degrees of Customer Service

ELEMENTS OF ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE: Customer [Value-Satisfaction-Experience]

CUSTOMER VALUE: Loyalty and CLV

UNCOVER CUSTOMER NEEDS: Follow Order to Meet

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS: How to Manage and Exceed.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX): Overall Customer Satisfaction



Assessment Criteria:

1. Elements of advanced customer services are explained.
2. Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) in customer services is defined.
3. Target Customers and customers' needs are interpreted.
4. Customer satisfaction metrics in contact center service is defined.
5. The opportunities to increase customer expectations are identified.



Resources Required:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

Workplace (actual or simulated).

Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.

Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activity – 1.1

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
<p>1.1 Illustrate concept of Advanced Customer Services (ACS).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information sheets: 1.1.1 to 1.1.2 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 1.1.1 to 1.1.2 ▪ Answer key: 1.1.1 to 1.1.2



Information Sheet – 1.1.1

Learning Objectives: To interpret concept of different degrees of Customer Service.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Understanding Different Degrees of Customer Service

Content Summary:

What Is Customer Service and Why is It so Important?

Customer Service for Businesses.

Understanding Different Degrees of Customer Service:

1. **What is Good Customer Service?**

4P's Characteristics of Good Customer Service

2. **What is Great Customer Service?**

The key components of great customer service

3. **What is Quality Customer Service?**

The core principles governing the quality of customer service

4. **What is Excellent Customer Service?**

The Key Drivers to make Excellent customer service that reduce churn rate.

5. **What is Exceptional Customer Service?**

The Key Ways to deliver Exceptional customer service that improves retention.

6. **What is Extraordinary Customer Service?**

The Key Factors to provide extraordinary customer service that generate referrals.

7. **What is Outstanding Customer Service?**

The Key Steps Towards Delivering Outstanding Customer Service.

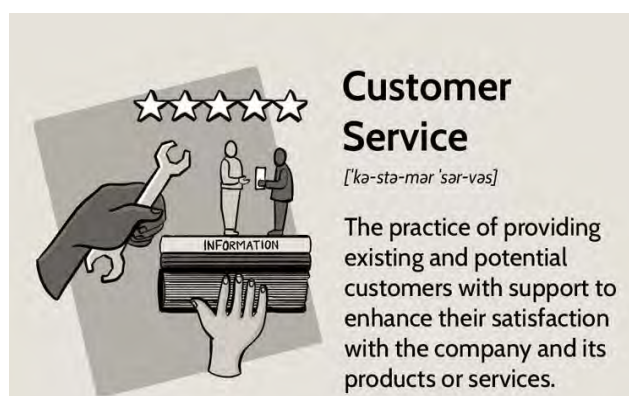
What Is Customer Service and Why is it so Important?

Customer service is the direct one-on-one interaction between a consumer making a purchase and a representative of the company that is selling it. Most retailers see this direct interaction as a critical factor in ensuring buyer satisfaction and encouraging repeat business.

Customer service covers any interaction between an organization and a customer. These interactions include everything from solving problems and answering questions to teaching a customer how to use a product or service. Customer service and support is a crucial department that can determine -- for better or worse -- the success of an organization.

Customer service representatives are the main line of contact between an organization and its customers, making CX (Customer Experience) a critical facet and the main priority. Offering amazing customer service is important if you want to retain customers and grow your business.

Customer service is an essential component of building strong customer relationships and ensuring customer satisfaction. When businesses provide excellent customer service, they can increase customer loyalty, generate positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and improve their overall reputation.



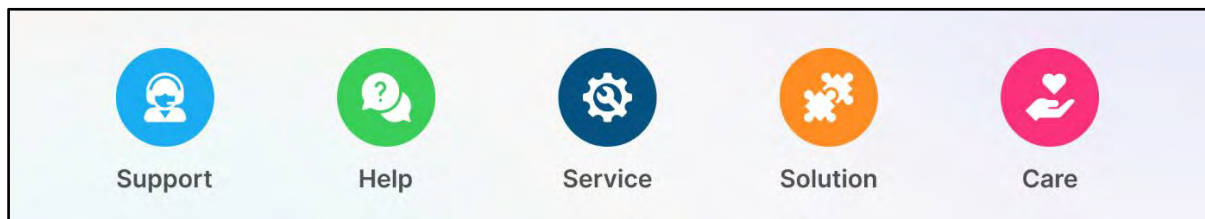
Customer Service for Businesses

What's your company's most valuable asset? It may be your great product, supportive shareholders, or dedicated team that comes to mind. But you will certainly agree that without satisfied customers, you're out of business. And that can be achieved by delivering extraordinary customer service.

Satisfied customers are the lifeblood of any business. It takes a lot of money to acquire a new customer, so business owners need to do what is necessary to ensure these customers come back. Many retailers try to encourage repeat business through sales and promotions, but one shouldn't underestimate the importance of good customer service.

An organization ensures to keep relationships with their customers and treat them extra special. It is very important for any organization to treat their customers well and care for them in order to be successful in their business.

Customer Service and Customer satisfaction is the basic ingredient these days. The customer considers this skill to be part of their lifestyle and hence it is crucial for us to go beyond the ordinary and create a memory for the customer when we serve them. Successful business owners understand the need for good customer service instinctively. Enterprises conduct in-depth studies and have concluded some key components.



Understanding Different Degrees of Customer Service

Overall, businesses that provide exceptional customer service can build stronger customer relationships, increase customer loyalty, and improve their overall reputation. By understanding the different degrees of customer service and tailoring their approach to meet the needs of their customers, businesses can create a competitive advantage in their market.

It is an excellent tactic since greater retention leads to significantly higher profits. In fact, an increase in retention rates of just 5% can boost profits from 25% to 95%.

Many customer-centric companies strive to differentiate themselves from the competition by offering good to outstanding customer service.

Customer service can be categorized into different degrees or levels based on the level of support and assistance provided to customers. Here is a brief overview of the different degrees of customer service in business:

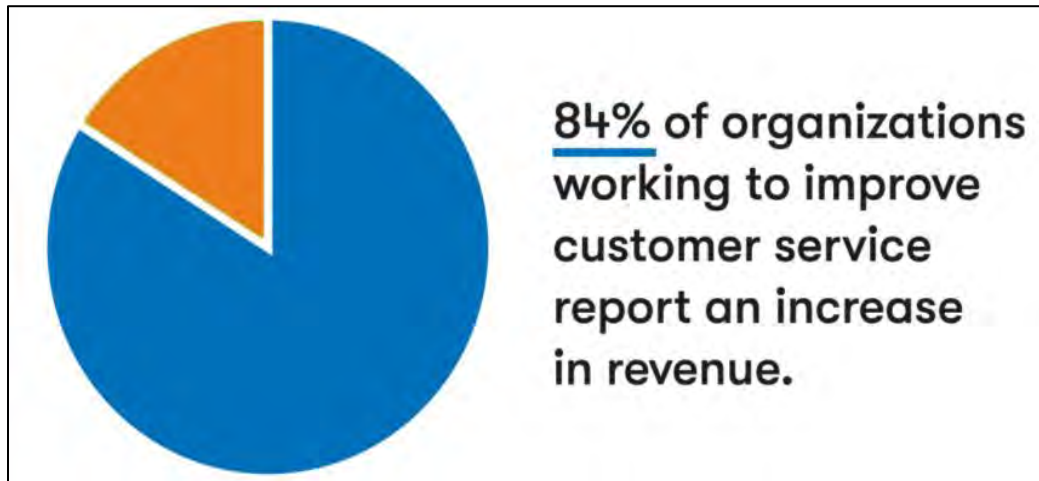
Understanding Different Degrees of Customer Service		
1	Good Customer Service	Boost Business Revenue
2	Great Customer Service	Showcases Brand Image & Values
3	Quality Customer Service	Higher Customer Lifetime Value
4	Excellent Customer Service	Reduce Customer Churn
5	Exceptional Customer Service	Increase Customer Retention
6	Extraordinary Customer Service	Generates Referrals
7	Outstanding Customer Service	Aligns Goals & Processes

1. What is Good Customer Service?

The key to good customer service is building good relationships with your customers. A happy customer will return often and is likely to spend more. Good customer service goes a long way and promotes more sales opportunities because you're building a company with a reputation for always wanting to impress its customers.

Good Customer Service = **Boost Business Revenue**

One of the key reasons for the importance of customer service in a business is because it correlates to revenue: **84% of organizations** working to improve customer service report an increase in revenue.



Putting is simple – prioritizing good customer service in organization increases revenue.

Characteristics of Good Customer Service

Customer service is the act of taking care of the customer's needs by providing and delivering professional, helpful, high-quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met. **Customer service** is meeting the needs and desires of any customer. **4P's characteristics of good customer service include:**

- **Promptness:** Promises for delivery of products must be on time. Delays and cancellations of products should be avoided.
- **Politeness:** Politeness is almost a lost art. Saying 'hello,' 'good afternoon,' 'sir,' and 'thank you very much' are a part of good customer service. For any business, using good manners is appropriate whether the customer makes a purchase or not.
- **Professionalism:** All customers should be treated professionally, which means the use of competence or skill expected of the professional. Professionalism shows the customer they're cared for.
- **Personalization:** Using the customer's name is very effective in producing loyalty. Customers like the idea that whom they do business with knows them on a personal level.

To ensure you provide the good customer service:

- Learn what your customers consider to be good customer service
- Try to find out your customers' expectations
- Follow up on both positive and negative feedback

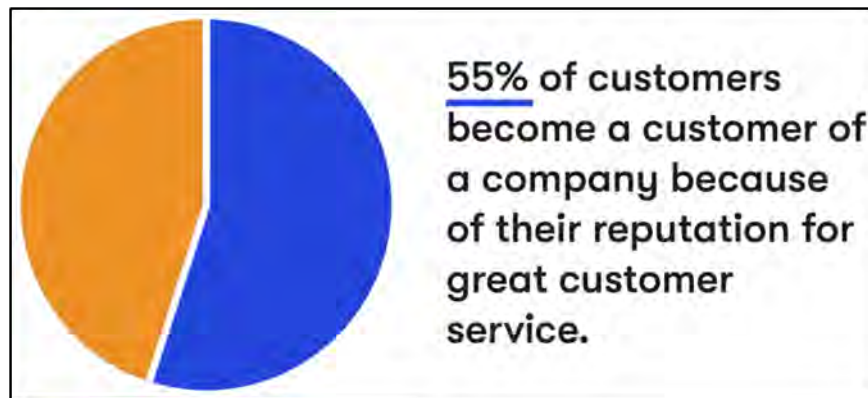
2. What is Great Customer Service?

Great customer service involves providing services promptly by using advanced customer engagement tools. It is the act of taking care of the customer's needs by providing product/service before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met.

Great Customer Service= Showcases Brand Image & Values

Brands that exhibit the best brand awareness gain popularity and fortune. And positive customer experiences play a huge role in brand awareness, as they often lead to word-of-mouth advertising.

Usually, customers choose to become the customer of a company because of their reputation for great customer service.



Studies show that 55% of people will pay more for great customer service. When you build a brand awareness strategy around customer loyalty, you'll see authentic and sustainable growth.

Great customer service allows you to:

- Ask for customer feedback to improve your product & services
- Gain new and repeat customers that add value
- Go the extra mile and deliver an unforgettable experience

The key components of great customer service are as follow:

- Addressing the issues raised by customers in real-time is critical. Requiring a customer to wait in queue sours an interaction before it begins.
- Customer service should be a single-step process for the consumer. If a customer calls a helpline, the representative should be able to provide the first contact resolution.
- If a customer is routed to a department/team, the original representative should follow up with the customer to ensure that the problem is resolved.

3. What is Quality Customer Service?

Diving right in with specific customer service techniques, or you could start with the core principles governing the quality of great customer service in the first place. They are:

1. **Speed,**
2. **Accuracy,**
3. **Clarity,**
4. **Transparency, and**
5. **Accessibility.**

Focus on a few things to maintain quality customer service:

- Understand your customers' needs and meet them
- Deliver consistent customer service across all communication channels
- Focus on your core product design to lure customers
- Realize what is follow up in customer service and implement its virtues

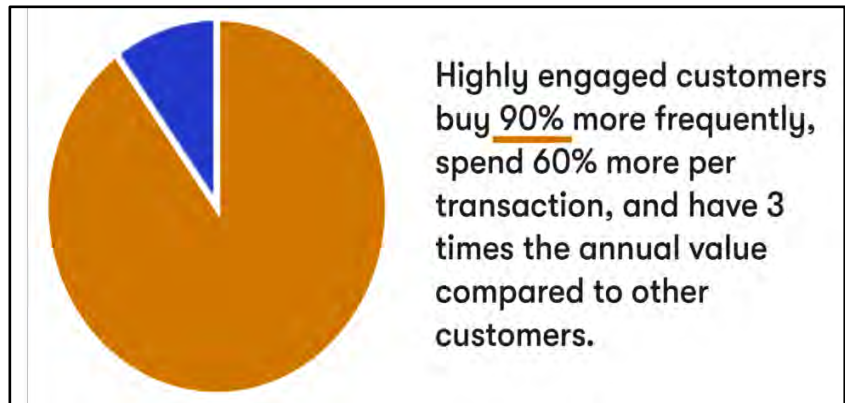
Quality Customer Service = Higher Customer Lifetime Value

Customer lifetime value (CLTV) is the amount of revenue that you can expect from a customer over the period that your service will be provided to them.

An increasing CLV means that your customers are spending more money each time they order.

Providing quality customer service is a great way to increase CLTV. If customers have a positive shopping experience, they will be more likely to buy from you again. It's also easier to market new products to existing customers.

Best customer service techniques to increase CLTV are:



- Better communications based on well-researched **buyer personas and customer segmentation**.
- **Go above and beyond** by sending a personal thank you message, offer a special gift or deal based on a customer's unique preferences.
- **Create a loyalty program** as it is an effective tool for increasing CLTV, with a 20%
- **Take a proactive approach** to train your team to ensure their standards for customer service are through the roof.

4. What is Excellent Customer Service?

Excellent customer service is defined as going the extra mile in making a customer highly satisfied with both the products or services of your company.

Successful companies make it a strategic priority as they know the importance of customer service and to retain customers as retention has a significant impact on their bottom line.

Excellent customer service should be a core component in the strategy of every company seeking to retain customer's long term. Investing in the same can [reduce customer churn rate](#), which decreases the amount to be spent on acquiring new customers.

Reduce Customer Churn = Excellent Client Service

When customers are treated well, they're more likely to remain loyal to that organization. With a well-trained and knowledgeable support team, your consumers will reward you by referring to their peers, helping the business to grow.

Conversely, poor customer service is utterly catastrophic. Almost [9 in 10](#) customers have left a business due to poor customer experience. In contrast, **86% of customers are willing to pay more just for a better customer experience—product aside.**

The Key Drivers to make excellent customer service that reduce churn rate.

Excellent customer service is critical to reducing churn rate, as it helps to build customer loyalty and satisfaction. Here are some key drivers to consider in making excellent customer service that can reduce churn rate:

Speed: Customers value quick responses and efficient problem resolution. Make sure that you have the right staffing levels, technologies, and processes in place to handle customer inquiries quickly and effectively.

Empathy: Empathy means understanding and caring about the customer's needs and concerns. Train your customer service representatives to listen actively, ask probing questions, and provide personalized solutions that address the customer's specific needs.

Communication: Effective communication is essential to excellent customer service. Ensure that you have clear and consistent communication across all channels, including phone, email, chat, and social media.

Proactivity: Proactive customer service means anticipating the customer's needs and taking action before they have to ask. This could include providing proactive updates, offering personalized recommendations, or resolving issues before they become major problems.

Accountability: Accountability means taking responsibility for the customer's experience, even if it means admitting fault. Empower your customer service representatives to take ownership of customer issues and ensure that they are resolved to the customer's satisfaction.

Personalization: Customers value personalized experiences that demonstrate that you understand their unique needs and preferences. Use data and analytics to personalize the customer experience, including personalized recommendations, targeted marketing, and personalized messaging.

By focusing on these key drivers of excellent customer service, you can reduce churn rate by improving customer loyalty, satisfaction, and retention.

With a well-defined customer experience strategy, you build your brand awareness and also measure everything from online reviews to social media sentiment to recommendation potential.

5. What is Exceptional Customer Service?

Exceptional customer service refers to the unconditional commitment towards delivering the highest quality product or service to every customer. Such a service gives customers a complete, cohesive customer experience that aligns with the organization's goal.

Best practices for providing exceptional customer service:

- Surpass your customer expectations by making them feel important & valued
- Be available to deliver a faster response to customers queries & issues
- Practice active listening skills and deliver personalized customer support

Increase Customer Retention with **Exceptional Customer Service**

Every business needs new clients, it is equally critical to improving customer retention as acquisition costs are **five times** more than retaining an existing customer. Delivering prompt and effective service boosts customer satisfaction and enhances the experience.

When customer retention increases there is an increase in profit. It is because repeat customers are more likely to spend more with your brand, which impacts operating costs.



Keyways that help to deliver Exceptional customer service that improves retention:

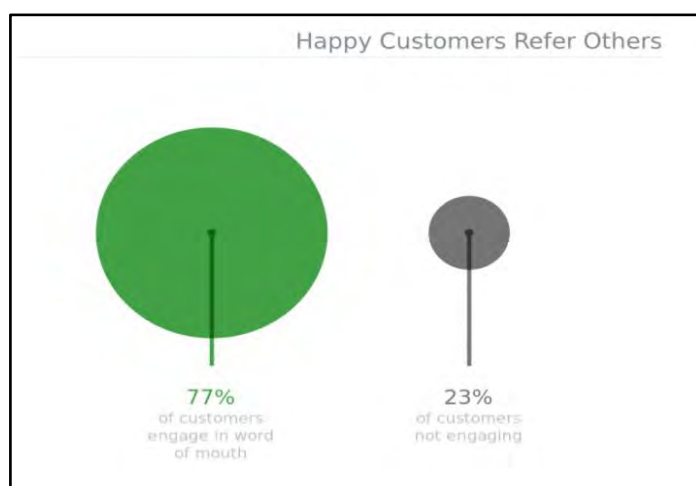
- **Immediate assistance:** Live chat helps to provide instant solutions to all the sales and support-related queries. By routing the conversation to the right support team the queries are solved faster.
- **Real-time personalized support:** Using co-browsing and video chat allows real-time collaboration and encourages personalized conversations that help in building personal and reliable customer relationships.
- **Consistent omnichannel service:** When you understand how customers interact with your brand across multiple channels, it increases customer satisfaction and acts as a great customer retention solution.
- **Deliver 24x7 support:** Leverage an AI-based chatbot that can engage customers' FAQs round the clock and reduce support tickets and improve customer satisfaction.

6. What is Extraordinary Customer Service?

Extraordinary customer service creates loyal customers for life who are willing to refer your business to friends, family, and colleagues.

Providing such kind of extraordinary customer service starts with a mindset to delight your customers, but you also have to think beyond selling your products or services. It also requires superb communication and problem resolution skills.

Extraordinary Customer Service = Generates Referrals



Positive word-of-mouth referrals come directly from previous and existing customers that have had a great experience with your company.

One of the key importance of customer service is you can get more brand advocates with less investment. It improves brand credibility and face value as well.

Word-of-mouth advertising is often considered to be the company's best and least expensive form of advertising.

When customers receive a satisfactory and delightful experience, they can't stop sharing their success stories with

their friends, relatives, colleagues and even post to their social network about your friendly and helpful customer service.

Such acts turn out to encourage their contacts to follow the same brand and make purchases.

Providing extraordinary customer service is a key factor in generating referrals, as satisfied customers are more likely to recommend your business to others. Here are some **key factors to consider** in providing extraordinary customer service that can generate referrals:

Anticipation: Anticipate the customer's needs and proactively address them. This could include providing personalized recommendations or offering solutions to potential issues before they become major problems.

Personalization: Personalize the customer experience by tailoring your communication and solutions to the customer's specific needs and preferences. Use data and analytics to understand their behavior and provide targeted recommendations and messaging.

Empathy: Empathy means understanding and caring about the customer's needs and concerns. Train your customer service representatives to listen actively, show empathy, and provide personalized solutions that address the customer's specific needs.

Responsiveness: Respond quickly and efficiently to customer inquiries and concerns. Use technology and processes that allow for prompt and effective communication and resolution of customer issues.

Consistency: Provide consistent customer service across all channels, including phone, email, chat, and social media. Ensure that your customer service representatives are trained to provide a consistent experience and messaging.

Follow-up: Follow up with customers after their initial interaction to ensure that their issue was resolved and they are satisfied. This could include a phone call, email, or survey to gather feedback and address any remaining concerns.

By focusing on these key factors, you can provide extraordinary customer service that generates referrals and builds customer loyalty and satisfaction.

7. What is Outstanding Customer Service?

When everyone at a company has the same end goal, the entire workflow becomes streamlined. Keep your focal point on your customer, then move through each department to align them behind customer service.

Outstanding Customer Service = Aligns Goals & Processes
--

The Key Steps Towards Delivering Outstanding Customer Service:

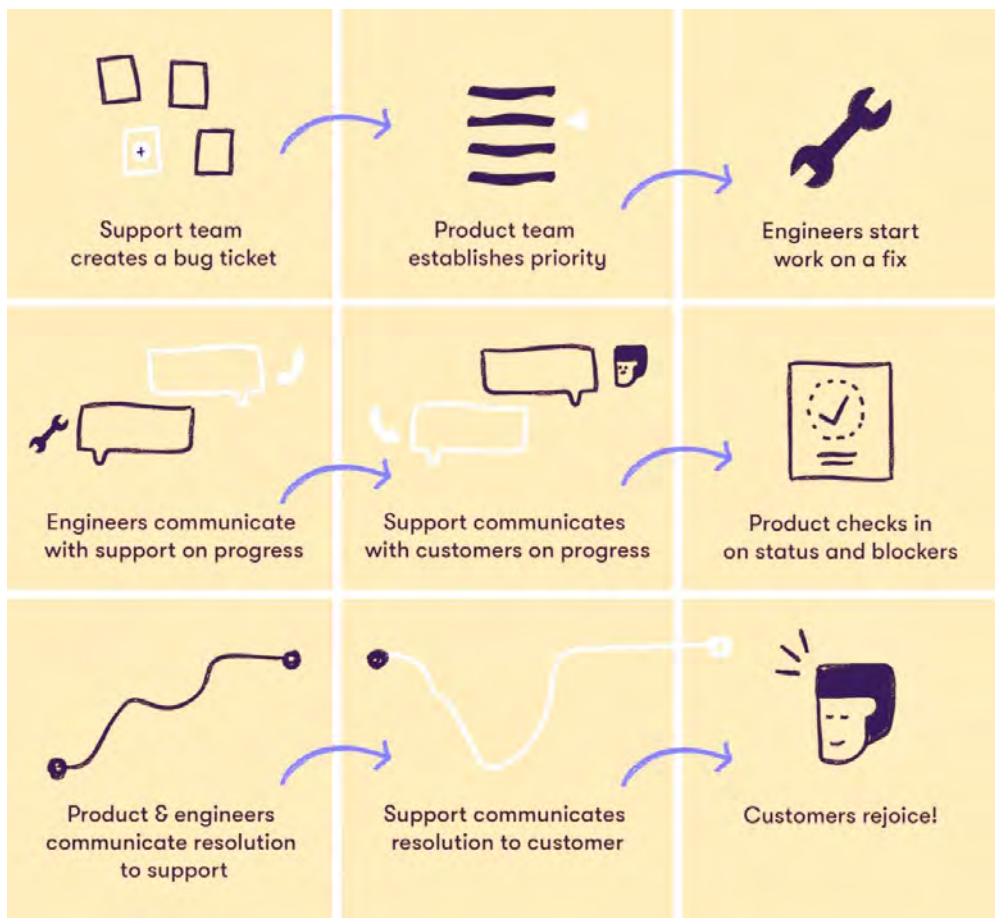
In today's hyper-competitive market, where information is more freely available, businesses need to meet the ever-changing customer expectations. It needs a concrete customer service plan that goes far beyond internal analysis.

Below is the blueprint that, if implemented, could benefit your business by ensuring it continually focuses and improves customer service.

- The first step is to **outline policies** to ensure the regular operations are consistent with all customers. The **customer needs** are broad so it is important to ensure your business can meet their expectations.

- The second step is to **put yourself in the customer's shoes**. Create a vision of how you would ideally like your customers to perceive you and consider the elements of your business that makes them choose you.
- To really make your customer service model worthwhile you need to **develop a solid customer engagement strategy** to differentiate is the third step. Conduct research to develop a unique strategy and set customer service benchmarks.
- The final step is to **set clear goals**. Aim to strengthen your customer relationships and ask for their feedback. Use technology to provide your customers with surveys and evaluate what attracts new customers and analyze customer retention.

For example, when everyone is on the same page, the flow for resolving an issue report should precisely look something like the below one:



To make sure this collaboration spans the long-term, set a larger goal to improve a customer experience-based metric, like NPS. Then, put the responsibility on every department to move the needle. You will have happier customers, more streamlined processes, and easily hit your KPIs.

[Leading and managing a customer service team isn't easy. It's hope that this course will make Team Leader's job just a little easier, and help to take their team's customer service to the next level. In **Module-3 Operate Contact Center Processes**, we will explore in details how to define outstanding customer service. And provide concept, tools, techniques, and best practice for your employees to deliver outstanding customer service.]



Self-Check Quiz – 1.1.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: Which of the following is NOT one of the characteristics of good customer service?

- A. Promptness.
- B. Politicalness.
- C. Professionalism.
- D. Personalization.

Question 2: Which one is the core principles of Quality Customer Service?

- A. Speed, Accuracy, Clarity, Transparency, and Responsibility.
- B. Speed, Accuracy, Charity, Transparency, and Accessibility.
- C. Speed, Accuracy, Clarity, Transparency, and Accessibility.
- D. Sharp, Accuracy, Clarity, Transparency, and Accessibility.

Question 3: Which Key Drivers to make excellent customer service that reduce churn rate?

Question 4: Which Key Factors to provide extraordinary customer service that generate referrals?



Answer Key – 1.1.1

Answer 1:

- B. Politicalness.

Answer 2:

- C. Speed, Accuracy, Clarity, Transparency, and Accessibility.

Answer 3: The Key Drivers to make excellent customer service that reduce churn rate

Speed
Empathy
Communication
Proactivity
Accountability
Personalization

Answer 4: Following Key Factors to provide extraordinary customer service that generate referrals?

Anticipation
Personalization
Empathy
Responsiveness
Consistency
Follow-up



Information Sheet – 1.1.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to identify three (3) key elements of advanced customer service.

ELEMENTS OF ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE:

Customer [Value-Satisfaction-Experience]

Key Takeaway:

What is an advanced customer service (ACS)?

Elements of advanced customer services (ACS):

- A. Customer Value**
 - A1. Customer Loyalty
 - A2. Customer Lifetime Value (CLV).
- B. Customer Satisfaction**
 - B1. Customer Needs
 - B2. Customer Expectations
- C. Customer Experiences (CX)**
 - C1. Customer Service vs. Customer Experience
 - C2. CX Management?

What is ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE?

Customer service has a direct impact on any business plus it is a key way to improve customer experience (CX). Want proof?

Customers today are not merely interested in the product or service they are buying, but also the add-on elements they get. Here is an easy way for you to strengthen your customer relationships.

Elements of ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICES (ACS)

- A. Customer Value**
- B. Customer Satisfaction**
- C. Customer Experiences (CX)**

A. Customer Value

What comes to mind when you hear the words “customer value”? You might think about money—giving customers a good price for a quality product—but customer value encompasses much more.

Today’s consumers don’t care only about price or quality. They also want the product or service they buy to solve a problem or need. With tons of shopping options at their fingertips, buyers are looking for companies that consistently deliver value.

Customers see value in a company that makes their lives easier and improves their overall sense of well-being. In their minds, the benefits of their purchase are worth the cost, and they’ll continue to reward the company with their business. Don’t focus on monetary costs alone. The key is to deliver a high-value product or service and a memorable, positive brand experience.

What is customer value?

Customer value is best defined as how much a product or service is worth to a customer. It's a measure of all the costs and benefits associated with a product or service. Examples include price, quality, and what the product or service can do for that person. There are also monetary, time, energy, and emotional costs that consumers consider when evaluating the value of a purchase.

Customer value is best defined as how much a product or service is worth to a customer. Here's how companies can enhance their value to improve the customer experience (CX) and increase satisfaction.

How is customer value created?

Customer value isn't only about money. It's typically created through the solution that a product or service provides, not only to the buyer but to their organization as well. Keep in mind that customer value is subjective. Price is universal—it will cost every customer the same amount to purchase your product or service. But the value will be different for every buyer because it involves so many variables, including customer experience.

For example, say you offer an ecommerce platform where businesses can post items for sale. You get two new customers—an online-based corporation and a mom-and-pop shop that, until now, has been brick and mortar. The cost is the same for both companies. But for the corporation, a new ecommerce site in and of itself may not drastically change their business. For the mom-and-pop store, however, going online could radically increase their sales. So, your company's value will likely be much higher for them than for the corporation.

Similarly, if you're selling software to multiple companies, your customer value will be higher for a business that relies on your product to run every department than for a business that only uses your product within one department.

Why is customer value important?

Delivering customer value is key to maintaining long-term relationships with existing customers and earning repeat business. It's an important part of meeting **customers' needs and expectations** and learning how they change over time. Knowing how customers feel about your product and the service experience you offer is key to building **customer loyalty and increasing customer lifetime value**.

Quality service can **add customer value**. According to Zendesk's 2022 Customer Experience Trends Report:

- 93 percent of customers will spend more with companies that offer their preferred option to reach customer service.
- 90 percent of customers will spend more with companies that personalize the customer service they offer them.
- 64 percent of business leaders say that customer service has a positive impact on their company's growth.
- 60 percent of business leaders say it improves customer retention
- 47 percent of business leaders report an increase in their ability to cross-sell due to good customer service.

Creating customer value for long-term success

People often measure a business' success by its sales. But to gauge a company's long-term success, you also have to consider another factor: the way customers feel after they make a purchase. To grow your company, customers should consistently feel your product or service was worth its price. Prioritize quality and offer competitive rates, and of course, deliver an above-and-beyond support experience. Customers will see your value and likely stick with your brand for years to come.

Creating customer value for long-term success means, knowing how customers feel about your product and the service experience you offer is key to **building customer loyalty and increasing customer lifetime value**.

Let us deep dive on:

- A1. Customer Loyalty** and
- A2. Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)**

A1. Customer loyalty:

What is customer loyalty?

Customer loyalty is an ongoing positive relationship between a customer and a business. It's what drives repeat purchases and prompts existing customers to choose your company over a competitor offering similar benefits.

One way to look at loyalty is in the context of brand. People are loyal to a brand because they associate it with a positive experience, such as great customer service, feeling connected to brand values and ideals, or consistently high product quality.

It's not about an individual product or service – loyalty happens as a result of multiple positive interactions that build up a feeling of trust over time. It also doesn't mean that every interaction has to be perfect. Customer loyalty can withstand a few negatives, although too many will break down the strength of the connection.

In fact, customers won't necessarily become disloyal from a poor experience, it's about how well the business handles that problem. **As Leonie Brown, Qualtrics XM Scientist**, says:

People who had a bad experience with a brand, but the brand fixed it, are more loyal than customers who never had a problem in the first place. That's because it involves trust.

–Customer loyalty is the intention of continuing the relationship," says Leonie. **–Now when you measure loyalty, the key is to work out whether that actually means anything. If you're thinking about the financials, it's about share of wallet – how much do people spend with you on a regular basis?"**

Why is customer loyalty important?

Customer loyalty is important for many reasons, not least because the effort of keeping a customer is substantially less than the effort of acquiring a new one. Why would you spend extra money to make a sale if you didn't have to?

A repeat customer has a 60-70% chance of converting.

– Paul Farris author of Marketing Metrics

Plus, new customers are that much harder to convince as they have very little with your business. This means not only making them aware of your brand and business, but then a comprehensive marketing strategy to push them down the funnel to get them to purchase.

But your customers who've already bought from you are already fully aware of your business and a lot easier to convince to give you another try. That means the more repeat customers you have, the less you'll have to spend on conversion tactics like abandoned cart offers.

But there are many other reasons too. Customer loyalty means your customers will keep coming back to you. But not only about repeat business – loyal customers typically spend more and they tell their friends.

Brand champions

Beyond reaching for their credit cards, loyal customers can boost your business in other ways. Whether you think of them as brand champions, Net Promoters or heroes of word-of-mouth marketing, your happy customers all have the potential to bring more business to your door. That may be by sharing their

positive opinions about you on social media, leaving positive reviews or simply telling their friends and family.

Customer loyalty typically equates to high customer satisfaction. When there's high customer satisfaction, you can expect a lighter load on your support and customer service teams too.

We've talked about customers being loyal, but in fact loyalty isn't an on-or-off, yes-or-no thing. Some people will have stronger loyalty to your business than others. They may be strongly loyal at a certain point and become less so (or conversely, start off neutral and develop loyalty). You might notice that loyalty shows up in their purchasing patterns, but doesn't lead to related behaviors like recommendations, referrals or positive reviews.

In fact, word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing is one of a business' most important and powerful tools.

It drives \$6 trillion of annual consumer spending, accounts for 13% of consumer sales, and people are 90% more likely to trust and buy from a brand recommended by a friend.

Because of its power and its complexity, it's important to measure customer loyalty over time, using a range of metrics that capture the entire customer journey through business data and customer feedback.

How do you measure customer loyalty?

Because loyalty is emotional, it makes it a little tricky to measure. But by using X (Experience) and O (Operation) data metrics in tandem, your business can track customers showing loyal behaviors, and turn that data into actionable insights.

Based on customer loyalty analysis, here are the key metrics and KPIs of how to measure customer loyalty and how you can make as part of a regular feedback loop:

- # 1. Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)
- # 2. Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- # 3. Customer Effort Score (CES)
- # 4. Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)
- # 5. Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)
- # 6. Upsell Ratio
- # 7. Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)
- # 8. Redemption Rate

[The above metrics calculated in **Job sheet sections** Page No: 410]

A2. Customer lifetime value (CLV).

What is Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)?

Customer lifetime value (CLV) is one of the key stats to track as part of a customer experience program. CLV is a measurement of how valuable a customer is to your company, not just on a purchase-by-purchase basis but across the whole relationship.

Customer lifetime value is the total worth to a business of a customer over the whole period of their relationship. It's an important metric as it costs less to keep existing customers than it does to acquire new ones, so increasing the value of your existing customers is a great way to drive growth.

Why is customer lifetime value important to your business?

Knowing the CLV helps businesses develop strategies to acquire new customers and retain existing ones while maintaining profit margins.

CLV is distinct from the Net Promoter Score (NPS) that measures customer loyalty, and CSAT that measures customer satisfaction because it is tangibly linked to revenue rather than a somewhat intangible promise of loyalty and satisfaction.

Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) is an important metric for businesses as it helps you to see the value of a long-term relationship, rather than a single transaction. It's also tied directly to the company's bottom line, which makes CLV especially useful for marketers and customer success teams because it allows them to quantify the value of an organization's **customer experience (CX)** efforts.

CLV is an analytical tool, not a perfect predictor of long-term performance. But for businesses that lack a quantitative view of what it takes to win and retain a customer over the long haul – and the value of doing so – measuring and monitoring CLV is immensely useful. – **Bill Gurley, Venture Capitalist**

Ultimately, you don't need to get bogged down in complex calculations – you just need to be mindful of the value that a customer provides over their lifetime relationship with you. By understanding the customer experience and measuring feedback at all key touchpoints, you can start to understand the key drivers of CLV.

CLV is a great metric to use when you have a multi-year relationship with a customer – say for a paid TV subscription or mobile phone contract. And it's good for spotting the early signs of attrition – say, for example, you see spend dropping off after the first year as they use the subscription less and less.

How to Measure Customer Lifetime Value

Businesses with Software systems don't have to worry about the math behind CLV. The system does all of the calculations for you. If you're looking to measure customer lifetime value manually, however, you can follow the steps and formula below.

Here is the formula for customer lifetime value:

$$\text{CLV} = \text{Average Transaction Size} \times \text{Number of Transactions} \times \text{Retention Period}$$

[The CLV calculated in **Job Sheet Sections** Page No: 410 Job Sheet-04]

B. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Everyone says they want customers to be satisfied, but what are you doing to make customers happy? How do you know if you are on the right track? How do you know if your customer satisfaction efforts make a difference? Why even aim for customer satisfaction at all?

We get it. Customer satisfaction is not the easiest part of running a business, but it's important. To cut to the chase, happy customers usually equal happy business owners.

Why? Because satisfied customers stick around as repeat customers. Customer retention also helps when happy customers share their positive experiences. But what if you have dissatisfied customers? In that case, you might lose those customers, plus experience negative word-of-mouth.

That's why it's so critical to measure customer satisfaction. If you spot gaps, you can then work on turning unhappy customers into satisfied ones.

To clarify the concept of customer satisfaction, we should know how to identify:

B1. Customer Needs

B2. Customer Expectations

Every customer has certain needs and expectations that have to be met before interacting with a brand. For that reason, a company should know **how to identify customer needs and expectations**, and use that information wisely to get the most benefit out of them.

Customer expectations are closely linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Understanding customer expectations helps diagnose problems and leads to higher satisfaction, repeat customers, and customer referrals.

According to SalesForce, 76% of customers expect companies to understand their needs and expectations. In other words, if you want to implement a customer-first strategy, you want to make sure you are on the positive side of the statistics.

B1. Customer Needs

Customer needs are motives that customers have to buy your product or service. Customers may have numerous requirements to complete their customer journey, which makes it even more important to properly identify them. Especially if you want to be the right solution to their problem. Before diving into the methods of identifying customer needs, it may be useful to differentiate them first – to gain a proper understanding.

1. Functional Needs

Functional needs are usually easier to recognize because of the obvious cue that triggers one to do the desired action – purchasing a product or service. As an illustration; if someone is walking down the street and suddenly the rain starts pouring, they will need an umbrella. If they buy the umbrella only for the sake of protecting themselves from rain, they will satisfy their functional needs.

Another example would be buying a pair of glasses only because the old ones fell on the floor and broke. Note that this cue should not be mistaken for impulsive shopping (when one sees something appealing on the shelf and convinces themselves they need it when in reality they don't).

2. Psychological Needs

Psychological needs are a bit more complex than functional because one can rationalize their purchasing decision in many different ways. To stick with the same example; if one is buying a new pair of glasses, not because the old ones had “an accident”, but because they are on a special discount, or they're more fashionable than the previous, one is trying to satisfy a psychological need. In other words, the person from the first example buys glasses to **see better**, while the other one is trying to make themselves **feel better** than they were before making that purchase.

UNCOVER CUSTOMER NEEDS: Follow Order to Meet

Being aware of the causes and the importance of customer needs, the only question is how to identify them.

1. Know Your Customer

Customer only buy if they expect as they want or meet their needs. If you want to sell to companies, you have to understand what benefits the customer expects or hopes for. This only works if a seller can recognize what the customer really wants or what goals he is pursuing the company with the planned acquisition.



For this, it is necessary to formulate a suitable question that gives me the wishful thinking of the decision maker. The benefit question is very powerful to prepare investment and give the decision maker the vision for a good decision.

The first step in discovering your customer needs is figuring out who your customers are in the first place. Regardless of whom you are selling to – whether it's a company or an individual – there is a **set of queries** you should know an answer to.

Category	Question	Description
Personal data	Who are they?	age, gender, marital status
Occupation	What do they do?	profession, interests, wanted achievements
Buying habits	When, how and what do they buy?	face-to-face or online; in the morning or in the evening, etc.
Financial status	How much money do they have?	knowing if your customer can afford your product or service
Emotions	What makes them feel good about buying?	knowing what makes them feel good help you to serve them accordingly
Expectations	What do they expect?	is it a best deal, quality product, convenience, great service, etc.
Opinions	What do they think?	knowing what they think about your company and your competitors

2. Collect Feedback

After you've gathered all the necessary information about the customer, you need to ask them the right questions to figure out what their needs and expectations are. There are lots of ways that can help you collect customer feedback and understand what influences purchasing decisions:

- **Voice of the customer** – by conducting a **customer interview**, you can learn a lot about their needs and buying patterns. After defining the right customer, you can shape the entire interview process according to what you want to find out. Is it something specific, or will you use more open-ended questions and see where that takes you — it is completely up to you.
- **Focus groups** – this qualitative research method is best to use to gain a deep understanding of a specific area. Unlike the customer interview, focus groups consist of a **targeted group of individuals** who are selected based on specific criteria (age, location, gender...). Keeping that in mind, every focus group should have a predetermined discussion prepared with a clear goal that one wants to obtain.
- **Surveys** – using surveys as a method of collecting valuable data may be the most convenient way when you want to learn what a larger population of respondents think about you, what their challenges are, or what they like the most. Surveys are popular, not only because of their **accuracy** but also because of their **flexibility** of conduction. Depending on your goal, surveys can be long, short, face-to-face, online, over the phone, etc. The sky's the limit.

3. Implement What You Have Learned

After you defined your customer persona and collected all the needed data, it is time to **put those findings into action!** To demonstrate, if the survey report pointed out that a customer is having a hard time finding your contact information, or navigating through your website in general, it should be clear to you what must be changed to make that process easier.

Implementation is the key. It is the final and most important step of the process. When you know who your customer is, what their buying patterns are, and what exactly they need and expect from you, it is easier to shape your product/service to meet their needs. After all, without the following action, not much can be done.

B2. CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS: How to Manage and Exceed.

All companies want to exceed customer expectations', but do you really know what that means? Learn the facts below.

What are customer expectations?

Generally, customer expectations are a set of ideas about a product, service, or a brand that a customer holds in their mind.

For example, customers that choose to go to Disneyland over other amusement parks may have developed higher expectations about Disneyland. For example, some of their expectations may include being able to meet their favorite Disney characters, eating food that they've seen in their favorite Disney films, or experiencing rides exclusive to Disneyland.

Customers set this cognitive expectation in their minds to feel satisfied with the experience and value for money. However, being able to identify customer expectations vs customer satisfaction is a complex process; some customers may have expectations that aren't so easy to see or plan for. Customers want these expectations met for them to **feel satisfied** with the customer service and with their purchase. They will also have expectations that are not so easy to see.

Let us explore how companies can deliver against these tangible and intangible expectations.

Why customers' expectations are vital to business?

Knowing your customer's expectations is important to all businesses - whether you're a small business or a large enterprise organization. This year, 60% of large organizations plan to increase the effort they put into improving their customer experience compared with the previous year. One survey found 65% of SMB respondents said that customer-centric agility has increased in importance as a result of COVID-19.

Customer expectations matter, because - if you can meet them - customers are likely to spend 140% more after a positive experience. To do well now and in the future, companies need to close the gap between customer expectations, and the actual customer experience.

Customer opinions after the purchase are important for companies. A **satisfied customer** is more likely to be loyal to a company as compared to dissatisfied customers. This is important for the future growth and sustainability of any company. In this regard, 80/20 is the general rule of thumb we can consider: 20% of the customers are responsible for 80% of the revenue.

Everyone has their expectations when buying a product. Whether this is conscious or not; this is true for

After saving money for a long period of time to buy something you always wanted, you would be disappointed if the product did not meet your expectations. By contrast, there are little or no particular expectations when purchasing random products in a supermarket. Expectations are linked to experience and the price of a product.

Money can be spent only once. A product fulfils needs; when the one could fulfil a need for a lower price, why should you buy the more expensive one? The possibility is greater that the quality of the expensive product is better than the cheaper one. It is the customers' choice. However, it is not fair to have the same expectations for both products; there must be a reason that one product is more expensive than the other.

Do customer expectations play a role in customer satisfaction?

By understanding the importance of customer expectations, you will **know how to meet customer expectations in your contact center or customer service business**. This will ultimately lead to a better and more positive rate of customer expectations vs customer satisfaction.

Customer expectations are a set of ideas about a service, brand, or product that people set in their minds. Seeing an ad, past experiences with your company, or even by viewing content on social media can all influence a customer's expectation.

Customer expectations are closely linked to customer satisfaction and [loyalty](#). Understanding customer expectations helps diagnose problems and leads to higher satisfaction, repeat customers, and customer referrals.

While expectations are important to measure, the best way to measure them is debatable. In fact, there's even disagreement on how to model the role of customer expectations on satisfaction. Before we talk about measurement, here are three popular approaches for how to model customer expectations:

- **Disconfirmation:** The experience either falls short or exceeds expectations, which affects a customer's satisfaction most. This is what I think most people think of when they think of expectations.
- **Experiences-only:** The most recent experience [overshadows prior expectations](#) and has the biggest effect on satisfaction. For example, if you expect your coffee at Starbucks to take a long time to be made and it actually takes a long time, you're still dissatisfied, even though your expectations were met (or even exceeded).
- **Ideal point:** Any deviation from what a customer expects impacts satisfaction, even if it's better than expected. While some research supports this model, I think it likely has limited applications because I'm having a hard time coming up with examples that when my expectations are exceeded, I'm less satisfied.

Measuring Customer Expectations- Is it difficult task?

Getting to know customers' expectations is a difficult task. Expectations are personal, and, therefore, subjective. Not everyone has the same expectations of the same product. Somebody who has been driving a car his entire life has great expectations when buying a new one from the same brand. Never having had problems with the old one results that the expectations for the new one is the same. That is the reason why the customer is not switching brands. A young customer who buys his first car doesn't have a life of experience which results in different expectations.

Customer expectations play a role in customer satisfaction. However, measuring customer expectations is difficult. Expectations are personal, and, therefore, subjective; more efficient is measuring customer satisfaction. Understanding your customers has always been, and still is of greatest importance. Mystery shopping can help raise customer satisfaction by providing insights into the front-line performance. The front line has a direct effect on customer satisfaction.

For most companies, customer relations are an ongoing process. For example, the continuous relationships between vendors and business customers or between a supermarket and its regular customers. Sometimes it could be difficult to measure customer expectations. There may not be a perfect way to measure them. Market researchers may be better off avoiding measuring customer expectations and relying instead on measures of satisfaction.

Generally, customer relationship management (CRM) calls for developing a more intimate knowledge of customers. This prescription, in turn, may suggest a more extensive use of customer surveys or mystery shopping programs. There are significant differences among specific types of measurements used in customer satisfaction research.

Market researchers should beware of over-reliance on customer surveys as measurements of service expectations. Unless they are carefully crafted, surveys are not always reliable due to a relatively high percentage of non-responsiveness. Surveys may not always filled in objectively or responses are constructed to comply with survey requirements rather than showcasing actual fact.

In addition to the sometimes-questionable data produced by such surveys, research shows that customer expectations can have a detrimental impact on customer satisfaction and the relationship with the company. High prices for products set by companies nearly always results in high expectations for customers. Fair enough! When the product doesn't meet the expectations of the customer, a disappointment cannot be avoided which results in a damaged relationship with the firm.

Mystery shopping programs can increase understanding about customer expectations and, therefore, help raise customer satisfaction. The program provides insights into the performance of your front line, customer-facing staff. Improving the functionality of your front line has a direct effect on customer satisfaction, as a result, mystery shopping helps businesses better understand their customers.

Now Define Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the degree to which products or services provided by a company meet a customer's expectations. In other words, customer satisfaction is how satisfied a customer is after doing business with a company.

Customer satisfaction –is a measurement of how happy (or unhappy) customers are with a company's products, services or experience. Customer satisfaction consists of a customer's perceived quality, value and expectations of your company and what you offer,”

Satisfied customers tend to be repeat customers. It also helps expand your business, such as through referrals and positive reviews.

On the flip side, dissatisfied customers can hurt your brand. Approximately –50 percent of customers will switch to a competitor after just one bad support experience,” finds Zendesk. Plus, unsatisfied customers can prevent others from becoming your customers. I know I'm not the only one who passed on a business after reading a bad review.

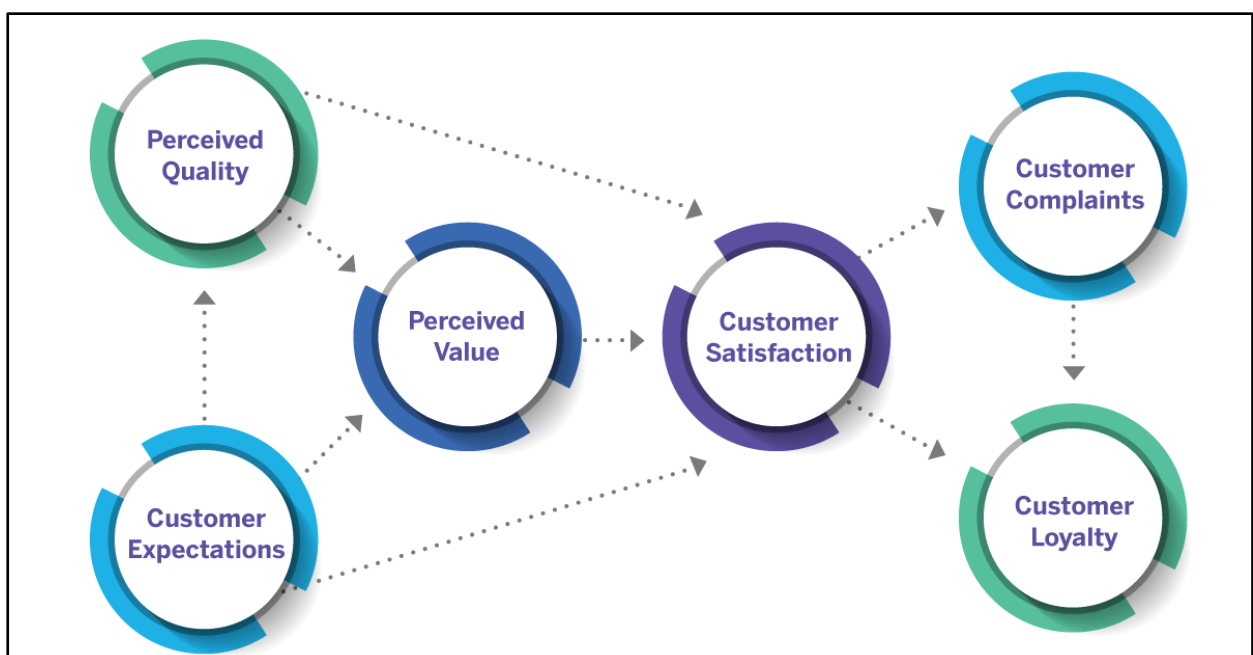
Why measure customer satisfaction:

Measuring customer satisfaction metrics gives you valuable insights into your overall business performance. Based on the insights you can enhance on the areas you are doing well and improve the areas having loopholes.

Customer satisfaction is about more than just minimizing complaints. Customer satisfaction is a common method used to determine how well you meet – or exceed – customer expectations. It is used as a key performance indicator of customer service and product quality.

Customer satisfaction may be best understood in terms of customer experience. Customer experience (or CX) is the total sum of a customer's perceptions, interactions, and thoughts about your business.

Customer satisfaction is a composite of many different aspects, and it is likely to change over time. Here is a **Customer Satisfaction Model** of the various facets that contribute to customer satisfaction (or not):



As you develop benchmarks for your customer satisfaction, you can also see how your business improves. Suppose you start a new refund policy. You can then measure customer satisfaction to see if that correlates with an improvement.

Measuring customer satisfaction can also tie into areas such as talent management. Maybe your customer satisfaction surveys show that customers aren't getting the help they need. That could mean your staff needs more training. Or maybe you need to hire more employees to share the workload.

Key metrics used to measure customer satisfaction

Measuring customer satisfaction metrics gives you valuable insights into your overall business performance. Based on the insights you can enhance on the areas you are doing well and improve the areas having loopholes.

Measuring customer satisfaction may seem tough. It's not like you can use a tape measure. But in a way, you can put customer satisfaction on a scale. How? By using customer satisfaction metrics. Some of the more common ones include:

To measure customer satisfaction, first you will need to calculate the following metrics:

- # 1. Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)
- # 2. Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- # 3. Customer Effort Score (CES)

1-Customer Satisfaction Score

A customer satisfaction score (CSAT) can be a brand's bread-and-butter customer satisfaction metric. It simply assigns a value to customers' self-reported overall satisfaction. For example, a customer support team might ask customers to rate a recent service experience on a scale of 1-100. Or, a CSAT survey might ask respondents how satisfied they are with a purchase on a simple 1-5 scale.

Although CSATs are common, there's not necessarily one standard measurement. The scales and questions used can vary, so a score may not be comparable from one brand to another. But don't fret. If you measure your own company's CSAT score, you can see how that changes over time to see if you're moving in the right direction.

2-Net Promoter Score

Another one of the more common metrics used to measure customer satisfaction is the Net Promoter Score (NPS®), created by consultancy Bain & Company. The score works by asking customers to rate how likely they'd be to recommend a company or product/service on a scale of 0 to 10. "Ratings of 9 or 10 indicate promoters; 7 and 8, passives; and 0 through 6, detractors. The Net Promoter Score is simply the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors," explains Bain. So, the scale runs from -100 to 100.

Determining your NPS could be more valuable than just averaging customer satisfaction scores. That's because it gives you a clearer idea of where you stand among those with the strongest views. If you have a low NPS score, that's reason to worry. Why? Because those dissatisfied customers might convince others to not buy from you. On the other hand, a high NPS tells you that you have a strong base of customers who can be advocates for your brand.

In general, a score that's a net positive (above 0), shows you're on the right track. What defines a good or great score is dependent on the industry. The creators of NPS say that anything above 20 is favourable. 50+ is excellent and 80+ is "world class".

3-Customer Effort Score

We all want low-effort interactions when it comes to spending our hard-earned money. That's why you should measure your customer effort score (CES). This metric was created by CEB, which is now part of consultancy Gartner.

To measure CES, ask customers on a scale of 1-7 whether they agree it was easy to resolve an issue (or a related question you want to ask). CES is then based on the percentage of customers who answer with a 5 or above, indicating they at least somewhat agree. "There's a much bigger opportunity to build loyalty if customers can move out of active disagreement or neutral territory," explains Gartner.

Common ways to measure customer satisfaction

Have a good grasp on customer satisfaction metrics? Great! Then we're on to the next step: collecting or organizing data to measure customer satisfaction. Common ways to do so include using:

Surveys:-

Many customer satisfaction metrics, including CSAT, NPS and CES, are based on customer surveys. You can also create your own custom surveys using a survey tool that ask respondents questions related to customer satisfaction to develop your own indicators. And then you can use a survey analysis tool to analyze and find insights in the responses.

For example, you may want to follow up on an NPS survey to determine what aspects of your brand a customer most enjoys. So, you might ask open-ended questions about that, like asking customers to describe their satisfaction level with a new feature you started offering. You can ask survey questions through essentially any medium. You can use email surveys, social media, your website, the phone, etc.

Customer feedback and insight:

Survey responses help, but don't put all your stock there. Some customers might be survey-shy and hold back information. And some might not want to fill out a formal survey, so you may have low response rates. That's why you need to analyze other sources of customer feedback. Truth is, most companies already get a ton of feedback from existing channels. This feedback can occur across channels like:

- **Email:** Customers might complain or give praise while interacting with your customer support team through email.
- **Social media:** Even if customers don't tag you or comment on your posts, they may still be talking about you on social. For many companies, there is a huge pool of untapped feedback on social media waiting to be analyzed.
- **Online reviews:** Check review websites like G2 or Capterra for customer feedback on your product. A lot of this feedback can be automatically pulled into feedback analytics platforms like Thematic for analysis.
- **Phone:** If a customer calls in, like for technical support, they may not be willing to stay on the phone for a formal survey. But they may still provide comments verbally that clues you in.
- **In-person:** In-person feedback might be more anecdotal, but it can still be a good way to measure customer satisfaction. For example, if you notice specific complaints popping up from retail customers in a store, that could be an area worth addressing. That may even be a predictor of future complaints that will start to show up in survey responses.

You can use a platform like Thematic to help make sense of all this customer feedback. Thematic uses NLP technology to structure and analyze text to find meaning and insights in feedback data. The great thing about the platform is that you can integrate, analyze and measure the dormant feedback you already have. Such as social comments, reviews, help tickets, surveys, metadata and more. And when you're analyzing by the source of feedback this helps you to understand context, urgency and the level of effort needed to improve customer satisfaction.

Analytics:- You might have certain internal analytics you can use to better measure customer satisfaction. For example, if you have a low CES, you might look at analytics around average customer wait time. If you can improve that aspect, you might see CES improve.

Or, you might look at analytics around repeat purchases to get a sense of customer satisfaction. If you sell something that's designed to be purchased more than once, yet you're not getting much repeat business, that could be an indicator of low satisfaction that you'd want to address.

C. Customer Experiences (CX)

Knowing the answer to the question "What is CX?" is crucial for everyone who wants the people they serve to have a positive perception of their organization. Superior customer experience can drive profitability and customer loyalty, and turn satisfied customers into brand advocates.

Focusing on CX is not just a task for retailers. Government agencies, dentists, hospitals, car washes, and any organization that provides products and services can apply customer experience best practices to ensure customers/citizens/patients are treated to great, frictionless experiences.

What Is CX?

Customer experience (CX) receives a lot of attention, but it's one of those terms that doesn't have a standard definition.

There is some variability in how business experts define it, but most definitions have some commonality – customer experience in its simplest form is the perception consumers have of a company's brand based on their interactions with that company. These interactions happen in multiple ways and across multiple channels. For example, a retail operation may offer the ability to order online, execute email campaigns, be active on Facebook, and have a contact center for customer service. The experience the business offers is the sum of those touchpoints. This means each touchpoint impacts the customer.

How does the retail store look, sound, and smell? Are emails sent too frequently? Are contact center agents professional and proficient? Do all the different touchpoints offer a consistent brand experience? Customer opinions are very personal and have a strong emotional component. Just think about the last time an interaction with an organization left you either delighted or frustrated, or even angry. That one incident that evoked extreme emotions probably established your opinion of the organization regardless of the quality of previous interactions.

This example is why so many businesses are making CX a priority. One bad experience can send even loyal customers heading for the door. In fact, PwC found that 32% of all customers would stop doing business with a brand they loved after one bad experience. It is particularly disappointing when businesses you're loyal to let you down.

Why is CX Important to Your Business?

We're deep into the experience economy, where more than two-thirds of businesses compete mostly on the basis of CX. Customer experience is the new battleground and brands that figure out how to consistently deliver exceptional CX will have an edge over their competitors. If this sounds dramatic, it's because the stakes are high. We've already discussed how a single bad interaction can cause even loyal customers to churn.

Now let's take a quick look at how consumers will reward brands that regularly deliver great customer experience:

80% of consumers make purchasing decisions based on an emotional connection with the brand. Recall that CX has a heavy emotional component to it. When businesses are able to forge positive emotional bonds, their customers are more likely to buy products and services from them.

Over two-thirds of customer loyalty is driven by CX, outperforming brand and price combined.

In these days of fickle consumers, businesses need to keep all the customers they can. Not only will increasing customer loyalty positively impact top line revenue, but it also decreases costs since acquiring new customers is much more expensive than keeping current ones.

Consumers who experienced very good CX are five times more likely to recommend a business than people who experienced very bad CX.

Customer recommendations are the most effective way to acquire new customers. Plus, word-of-mouth marketing is essentially free. Businesses that solve the CX puzzle will have more brand advocates that generate new business.

What does this positive customer behavior mean for overall business results? Adobe found that, “Companies that prioritized and effectively managed customer experience were three times more likely than their peers to have significantly exceeded their top business goals” in the prior year.

Organizations that are serious about using CX as a competitive business strategy take a structured approach to managing and continuously optimizing it, which brings us to the next topic.

What Is CX Management?

CX management, or customer experience management (CEM), is the discipline of getting to know customers so well that businesses can anticipate their needs and consistently meet their expectations. It's a largely data-driven process, but there's also an organizational and people component to it.

Organizations that formalize CX management recognize that CX is too important to their business strategy to let it evolve organically. Therefore, they begin by understanding what customers want and value, and then align and improve all their touchpoints to give customers the kind of loyalty-building CX they value.

In its purest form, customer experience management also calls for organizational changes that destroy silos, encourage collaboration, and motivate employees to do their part in delighting customers.

Customer Service vs. Customer Experience

With all the different terminology in the CX world, it's understandable how “customer service” can be confused with “customer experience.” However, they're two different, although related, concepts.

CUSTOMER SERVICE – The Traditional Way of Connecting and Meeting Needs

Customer service is what people experience when they need help, whether it's making a retail purchase, or checking in at hotel, or calling a contact center for support. While the concept of customer service is quite simple – since it is a necessary function of any business – the consequences can be profound. HubSpot research indicates that 93% of customers are likely to make repeat purchases with companies that provide excellent customer service.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX): Sum of all Interaction.

Customer experience is a modern reboot of an old principle, one that builds on the customer service axioms and adds more expectations, reflecting the changing lifestyles, various channels, and new technologies that shape contemporary customers' habits, needs, and goals.

Zendesk explains: “Customer experience is everything related to a company or business that affects a customer's perception and feelings about it.”

Moreover, **customer experiences** consider three perspectives:

usefulness, practicality, and enjoyability.

If something is **useful**, it delivers value, if it is **practical**, it is easy to use, and if it is **enjoyable**, it is emotionally engaging so that customers will want to continue using it.

Corporate management understands that technological developments have transformed all aspects of business, and **customer experience** is no exception.

Gartner, the foremost advisory company, believes that technology is a critical component of **customer experience** initiatives. Gartner's research identifies the top emerging technologies impacting **customer experience** projects as:

1. Artificial intelligence (AI),
2. Virtual customer assistants and chatbots,
3. Omnichannel customer engagement,
4. Real-time event-driven application architecture,
5. Internet of things (IoT).

It might help to think of CX as a recipe and customer service as one of many ingredients that make the recipe taste bad or good.

How Is CX Measured?

CX is difficult to measure because there isn't a single metric that indicates whether CX is good or bad. Organizations frequently use a collection of KPIs that collectively indicate the quality of their customer experience, including the following:

- **Customer Satisfaction.** As previously mentioned, CSAT scores indicate how satisfied customers are with a specific aspect of the business.
- **Net Promoter Score (NPS).** Net Promoter Score measures a customer's willingness to recommend a business to friends and colleagues and is considered a key indicator of CX quality and customer loyalty.
- **Customer Effort Score (CES).** Customer effort scores indicate how much effort a customer exerted while transacting with a business. If customers need to work hard, that's bad CX.
- **Customer Sentiment.** As mentioned previously, customer sentiment scores enable organizations to know how their customers are feeling in near real-time. When tracked over time, sentiment scores can help business determine whether their CX improvements are having the desired effects.
- **Customer Retention.** Since increasing customer retention is a primary objective of CX strategies, retention should be part of the collection of metrics organizations use to monitor CX success.
- **Customer Lifetime Value (CLV).** Customer lifetime value measures the economic value of a customer across the tenure of their relationship with a company. Higher CLV is driven by loyalty and spending behavior, both of which are influenced by CX.

For Detail Worked Example, please see our Job Sheet Section



Self-Check Quiz – 1.1.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What is customer value?

Question 2: How to create customer value for long-term success?

Question 3: What is customer loyalty?

Question 4: What is Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)?

Question 5: What are Customer Expectations?

Question 6: Mentioned the 4 types of Customer Expectations?



Answer Key – 1.1.2

Answer 1:

Customer value is best defined as how much a product or service is worth to a customer. Here's how companies can enhance their value to improve the customer experience (CX) and increase satisfaction.

Answer 2:

Creating customer value for long-term success means, knowing how customers feel about your product and the service experience you offer is key to building customer loyalty and increasing customer lifetime value.

Answer 3:

Customer loyalty is an ongoing positive relationship between a customer and a business. It's what drives repeat purchases and prompts existing customers to choose your company over a competitor offering similar benefits.

Answer 4:

Customer lifetime value is the total worth to a business of a customer over the whole period of their relationship. It's an important metric as it costs less to keep existing customers than it does to acquire new ones, so increasing the value of your existing customers is a great way to drive growth.

Answer 5:

Customer expectations can be defined as the perceived value or benefits that the clients look for while purchasing products or services.

Answer 6:

- Implicit expectations
- Explicit expectations
- Interpersonal expectations
- Static performance expectations



Learning Outcome 1.2 - Interpret contact center structure and functions.



CONTENTS:

CONTACT CENTER: Definition, Type, Functions and Structure.
CONTACT CENTER SETUP REQUIREMENTS – The Checklist
CONTACT CENTER PROCESS: A Blueprint
CONTACT CENTER PROCESS METRICS AND KPIS: A deep dive



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Contact Center components are described.
2. Organizational structure is illustrated.
3. Contact Center setup requirements are identified.
4. Contact Center Process Blueprint is expressed.
5. Service levels of a Contact Center is explained.
6. Contact Center matrices/KPIs are described.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Workplace (actual or simulated).
- Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.
- Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activity – 1.2

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
1.2 Interpret contact center structure and functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Sheets: 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 • Self-Checks Quiz: 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 • Answer keys: 1.2.1 to 1.2.4



Information Sheet – 1.2.1

Learning Objectives: To Interpret contact center definition, type, functions, and structure.

CONTACT CENTER: Definition, Type, Functions and Structure.

Content Summary:

What is a Contact Center?

Contact Center vs. Call Center

Types of Contact Centers

What is a Cloud Contact Center?

What is Contact Center as a Service (CaaS)?

Essential Contact Center Services & Benefits

Technologies Used in a Contact Center

Key Components of a Contact Center Operation

1. Customer
2. People
3. Technology
4. Process
5. Location
6. Finance and business management

Contact Center: Organizational structure

Right Team Roles and Responsibilities

Organize Clear Hierarchy

Introduction:

Customers these days have incredibly high standards for the B2C businesses to whom they hand over their hard-earned money. In fact, in a recent survey, Emplifi found that 86% of consumers will stop buying from a favorite brand after just two to three bad customer service experiences.

And, as customers experience increasingly better treatment from other companies, what qualifies as “a bad experience” in their minds expands in scope. From a customer’s perspective, bad could be slow responses from an agent, having to repeat the same information more than once, or not being able to use their preferred communication channel.

This is why, today more than ever, B2C companies are focused on creating an effective contact center, the central location from which they manage their customer communications. Below, we’ll introduce you to contact centers and explain how they work, their benefits, and the various forms they take.

What is a Contact Center?

A contact center is the business division that handles communications with a business’s customers. Typically, the contact center is staffed with customer service agents who interact with customers over various channels, often including call, email, text, live chat, voice over IP (VOIP), and social media.

Although agents will generally spend most of their time fielding and placing phone calls, other channels of communication, such as Facebook messaging, are gaining traction with consumers. Businesses have to adapt their contact centers to offer these ways of connecting to satisfy their customers’ expectations.

It follows that the main purpose of the contact center is to provide customers with technical support, sales assistance, and other forms of customer service in a seamless and efficient manner. These centers should make it as easy as possible for customers to get the help they need to resolve their situations.

As for the benefits, contact centers provide, they save your agents time, reduce customer service costs, lower employee burnout, improve customer loyalty, and help you form a more accurate understanding of your customers via the data you collect and the conversations your team leads.

Typically, companies take a digital-first approach when designing their contact centers, meaning they will power the center with some sort of contact center software or CCaaS (we'll cover these in more depth later) that provide helpful tools and data for agents in an accessible, online location, along with real-time analytics and other useful features for managers. Now, let's go over how contact centers work to accomplish their goal of providing top-notch customer service.



Contact Center vs. Call Center

The major difference between a contact center and a call center is that contact centers tend to use a variety of customer communication channels, from phone calls to text and online chat, while call centers are confined to making and receiving phone calls. So which is better?

If we think of them going head-to-head, with “Contact center vs. Call center” lit up on the jumbotron above a boxing ring, we’d want to put our money on the contact center. It’s not just more robust, but also more agile and has more moves in its repertoire. Reps can solve issues more quickly when able to use the appropriate channel.

With a contact center, you give your customers a choice as to how they communicate with you. This is something they’ll appreciate. Not everyone wants to have to get on the phone to handle a simple request. That said, let’s now go over some other reasons why contact centers are so beneficial to B2C businesses.

But what exactly are the differences between call center vs contact Center?

‘Call Center’ and ‘Contact center’ are very often used interchangeably. However, they are two distinct models for business communication and customer service. When it comes down to it, the primary difference between the two is that; contact Centers handle voice communications, while contact centers handle all communications.

Before we jump into the differences, let’s understand what call centers and contact centers are:

A. Call Center

Call Centers are offices where agents handle both inbound (calls initiated by customers) and outbound calls (calls originating from a customer service representative, usually sales calls). These agents take calls from both new and existing customers.

B. Contact Center

In contrast, contact centers handle many **different** communication channels such as telephone calls, SMS, email, social media, etc. This omnichannel communication allows customers to move smoothly from one channel to another. It also gives them the freedom to choose how they want to communicate.

Now that we have a basic understanding of the two, let’s analyze their differences:

Contact centers are basically the evolution of call centers. In addition, they appeared with the proliferation of digital communication channels to meet the growing demands of consumers. Today, contact Center software often comes as an integrated part of help desk software. Some of the key differences between contact Centers and contact centers are the following;

Voice vs. digital service channels

Contact Centers are focused on inbound and outbound voice calls; either on traditional phone lines or over VoIP. They are designed to handle a massive volume of calls. Contact centers are able to interact with customers over a variety of service channels. For instance, traditional voice, email, live chat, as well as social media, video, bots, in-app, SMS/text.

Reactive vs proactive service

Traditionally, a contact Center's default strategy for providing customer service is to; reactively respond to inbound requests and complaints as they arise. Though today's contact Center software solutions allow keeping track of customer information; contact center software compiles all customer data from across all channels into a single customer profile. Thus, giving agents a more comprehensive view of customer behaviors and preferences. This also enables them to deliver a more predictive and proactive service.

Self-service options

Both contact Centers and contact centers use automation through IVR systems that operate via spoken responses and/or keypad entries. These allow customers to resolve issues in a self-service mode, often without involving a live agent at all. Contact center software solutions, however, usually offer additional self-service capabilities with; AI and bots.

Call Center Vs. Contact Center: How are they Different?	
Here's a breakdown of the key differences between call centers and contact Centers:	
Call Center	Contact Center
Call Centers take a single-channel approach to customer service. This includes managing inbound and outbound customer phone calls.	Contact centers take an omnichannel or unified communications approach to customer services. This includes services on communications channels other than telephone calls, such as email, social media, live chat, etc.
Call Centers have limited customer self-service (CSS) capabilities. They use Call Center software like interactive voice response (IVR) systems. This helps with routing calls to relevant agents.	Contact centers have advanced CSS capabilities that go beyond IVR. This includes chatbots, an FAQ web page, an online knowledge center, etc. These self-service channels help customers find answers independently.
Call Center agents have limited customer data as they use speech analysis software to analyze customer calls and gain customer journey insights.	Contact centers offer personalized data and better customer profiling as they have better Artificial Intelligence solutions and analyze multiple communication channels.

Types of Contact Centers

Every business's contact center will be unique since each business will have distinct goals, resources, and customer service philosophies. However, contact centers typically fall into one of the following categories: omnichannel, multichannel, inbound, outbound, and blended. Below we'll give you the basics of each type of contact center so you can start to think about which type is best for your business's needs.

Omnichannel

So, what is an omnichannel contact center? Essentially, it is a form of a contact center that gives its customer service agents the ability to use every available channel to communicate with its customers, and all the channels are integrated and accessed from one technology platform. This versatility allows agents to provide customers with the personalized experience they desire. Because of this, omnichannel contact centers are becoming the go-to type for small and medium-sized B2C businesses.

Multichannel

A multichannel contact center is similar to an omnichannel contact center in that it uses multiple communication channels, but different in that the channels are not integrated and each channel is operated from a unique and separate technology infrastructure. When deciding on omnichannel versus multichannel contact centers, customer service managers tend to choose omnichannel because it gives the customer a better experience. For instance, with multichannel contact centers, your agent might have trouble accessing a customer's call history while they are communicating through live chat, which forces the customer to tell their story all over again.

Inbound

An inbound contact center is filled with customer service or support agents who answer incoming customer communications. This means the customers are the ones who reach out first, either through a call, interactive-voice response, live chat, email, or another medium. This type is more commonly used than outbound centers, especially in ecommerce, retail, and tech.

Outbound

An outbound contact center consists of agents who proactively reach out to customers for various reasons, the most common one being to generate new sales. However, they may also contact customers to conduct market research via surveys or handle issues such as unpaid bills. Because of FTA regulations warning against calling people who haven't given a business the green light to contact them, these centers are becoming less common.

Blended

A blended contact center enables its agents to receive and initiate contact with customers. It facilitates both inbound and outbound customer service approaches. For example, the blended contact center will likely make use of automated call routing for inbound calls and predictive dialing for outbound ones.

What is a Cloud Contact Center?

A cloud contact center, often referred to as cloud contact center software, is a centralized, online platform that handles all outbound and inbound customer communications across multiple channels. These software solutions provide customer service teams with cloud-based services and tools that help them manage agents, automate tasks, distribute calls and messages, track and analyze data, and much more.

The most impactful feature of a cloud contact center is that it integrates different channels into a single system. This allows customers to interact with agents on their preferred channel, whether it's text, phone, email, or another supported channel. They're able to take an omnichannel approach.

A. On-premise Contact Centers

Companies can install hardware contact centers in physical office spaces and on-premises servers. Note that these hardware contact centers require organizations to have sufficient infrastructure to house and maintain the servers. They'll also need an effective disaster recovery procedure and competent hardware update processes.

B. Hosted Contact Centers

A hosted contact center refers to an outsourced customer service infrastructure. Through contact center outsourcing, a company contracts its customer service to a third-party managed service provider. This is similar to outsourcing services like information technology, automation, financial services, etc.

What is Contact Center as a Service (CaaS)?

Contact center as a service (CaaS) is a cloud-based customer communication solution that allows businesses to buy only the tools they currently need from the software provider. With CaaS, businesses can set up their contact center faster than if they were to create an on-premise center. With CaaS there is no need for internal hardware or IT. All the tools are in the cloud, and the provider is responsible for troubleshooting any issues.

CaaS allows customer service teams to do the following:

- **Improve Scalability:** If you need to add agents to your team, there's no need to buy new equipment. You have the power to add capacity to the software when you need it.
- **Reduce Costs:** CcaaS prices fall between \$35 and \$100 per user per month, making them less expensive than on-premise centers that require expensive equipment, maintenance, IT staff, and licensing fees.
- **Centralize Customer Communications:** CcaaS solutions break down data silos and enable agents and businesses to view data about all customers from one online location.

Another considerable benefit of CcaaS is that users pay monthly. This makes forecasting costs easier than one-off equipment purchases, so customers can plan more effectively. In conclusion, a CcaaS solution not only makes your customer service team more effective but also can dramatically decrease the costs associated with running a contact center.

5 Essential Contact Center Services

The main aim of a contact center is to meet customer expectations with efficient and interactive customer support, sales assistance, and technical support through their preferred channel.

Let's look at five contact center services in detail:

1. Telephone Service

Call centers are like modernized contact Centers. They are equipped to handle a large call volume of inbound and outbound calls as a part of many contacts center services.

A. Inbound Calling

Incoming calls that contact centers receive are known as inbound calls. Your contact center's customer service representatives handle any such incoming call from a customer.

For example, a customer has a query regarding connecting a printer they recently purchased from your company. You can get an incoming call from that customer looking to get help in setting it up.

B. Outbound Calling

An outbound call refers to a call made by a contact center representative. Outbound services or phone calls may be part of surveys, lead generation campaigns, a direct sales phone call, etc.

For example, if you have a health insurance company, your sales team may contact potential leads to explain your insurance plans and convert these leads into paying customers.

In some cases, contact centers may use an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to handle incoming and outgoing calls. This computer-based phone system uses keypad entries or voice commands to provide information to customers without requiring human intervention.

2. Text Messaging Service (SMS)

Long hold times, transferred calls, language barriers, etc., are some customer complaints about call-based customer service. In such scenarios, text messaging can go a long way in improving customer satisfaction. Text messaging is fast, personal, and safe. Additionally, it can boost agent productivity since they can handle multiple customer conversations simultaneously. You can use text messages to

- Start two-way conversations.
- Send proactive updates about the customer's issues.
- Conduct various surveys.
- Take feedback regarding the customer service, etc.

From telephone calls to SMS, these omnichannel services enable you to handle inbound and outbound customer communications effectively.

3. Chat Service

Chat is becoming a popular communication tool due to its efficiency and ease of use.

It has a **First Contact Resolution (FCR)** rate of almost 74%, significant for a contact center. FCR is a metric to measure a contact center's ability to resolve the customer's issue in the first contact. A

customer can initiate a chat conversation from specialized chat windows on the client website. The chat window connects them to an agent or chatbot to help resolve their queries.

There are two types of chat services offered by a contact center:

A. Chatbots

Contact center technology includes chatbots that use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to engage customers, gather relevant information about an issue, and even answer simple questions without any human assistance. And if the issue requires an agent intervention, the chatbot escalates it to an appropriate contact center agent.

B. Live Chat

Another advanced technology used by modern contact centers includes live chat. This platform is different from chatbots because it has a human contact center agent at the other end offering the answering service.

A chat with a live agent can help:

- Reduce the need for IVR,
- Reduce customer waiting time
- Increase first contact resolution
- Work on the customer's shared screen in real time, etc.

Customers who prefer self-service find chatbots and live chat extremely effective tools to get their support.

4. Social Media Service

Contact centers also offer social media services for digital channels like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.

You can use your social media channels to listen to, analyze, and engage with your customers daily. This way, you can monitor and publish relevant content to boost your customer interaction and satisfaction.

5. Email Service

Email is another popular digital customer support channel.

Contact centers usually have an email management software solution to help organize emails, enabling your customer service representatives to handle a large volume of emails efficiently. Additionally, this software solution may offer email templates that enable your contact center agents to respond to emails promptly, provide standardized customer care, and increase customer satisfaction.

Contact Center Benefits

Today, customers expect a customized experience from the customer service agent and prefer customer support that goes beyond a single platform approach. That's why contact centers are increasingly popular.

Let's look at the top three benefits of contact centers:

1. Enhanced Customer Experience

Your contact center is often the primary communication channel for most of your customer interactions. That's why your customer service can have a significant influence on your business. You can use your contact center to ensure that you provide an exceptional customer experience.

For example, if you own a software company, you can use contact center services like live chat as an answering service for customers. This will help them explain their issues effectively and help your agents provide technical support efficiently. Contact centers help customers connect to the most suitable platform to resolve their problems faster. This can increase your customer loyalty, resulting in life-long customers.

2. Increased Agent Efficiency

Since contact centers combine customer information from multiple channels in one place, agents are more efficient and effective while handling customer requests. Additionally, assigning the right queries to the right agent using IVR and Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) systems reduces the chances of errors. In fact, it increases your agents' and company's operational efficiency.

Having the right tools and technologies empowers a contact center agent to provide superior service and keep customers happy. Happy agents are more likely to work with you for a longer duration, reducing your operational cost that results from a high agent turnover.

Better Business Insights

Your contact center combines customer interaction from various communication channels.

The customer data gathered from these interaction channels can provide actionable insights that may help you make important business decisions. Identify patterns and problem areas across the customer journey to make decisions regarding your product design, quality issues, etc.

For example, contact center analytics can help you determine your customers' most preferred communication channel. You may find that your target customers prefer to interact through your social media channels rather than through text messages.

This information will allow you to strategize your outreach to reach maximum people and boost your business. A contact center must ideally provide a detailed privacy statement and establish a privacy preference center to protect its customer's rights while analyzing their data.

Technologies Used in a Contact Center

Customer service leaders often implement various types of technologies into their contact centers in order to increase agent effectiveness, reduce administrative work, and enable data transparency. Some of the most common types of technologies deployed are interactive voice response (IVR) software, automatic call distribution (ACD) software, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

Below are introductions to the most common technologies used in a contact center:

- **Automatic Call Distribution:** ACD systems automatically pick up, assess, and route incoming calls to the person on the team best equipped to handle the query. This accuracy ensures customers and agents save as much time as possible.
- **Customer Relationship Management System:** CRMs house data about a company's customers, and agents can use this data to better help them. For example, a quick look at their billing history can help answer a payment question.
- **Computer Telephony Integration:** CTI technology connects the computer to the telephone, allowing reps to work from their computers. When a call comes in, for example, they can see the call and answer it on their screen.
- **Predictive Dialers:** A predictive dialer automatically dials down a list of phone numbers and spots and moves past disconnected or busy lines, thereby saving time. Some tools can also do this for other communication channels, like email or text.
- **Call Recording Systems:** Contact centers often use software that records phone calls so that agents and managers can review the calls later to find the information they need or evaluate an agent's performance, often for coaching purposes.
- **Interactive Voice Response:** IVR contact centers enable customers to get information they need without having to speak with an agent. Callers listen to the automated recording and press or say the numbers corresponding to their needs.

Equipping your agents with state-of-the-art technology will help them reach their ultimate potential. Not to mention, it will also limit employee frustration, since it's often those tedious and repetitive administrative tasks that bug agents the most.

Please read **information sheet 4.4.2 Contact Center Technology: Best Return on Investment (ROI)** for the detail discussion on latest technologies in a contact center employ.

Contact Center Businesses:

As experts in the delivery of on-demand contact center services, we never tire of explaining the ins and outs of how they work and what they can offer businesses.

One alternative that you may consider is outsourcing. Outsourcing (also known as **BPO**) has become a hot topic in today's contact center business.

- What can outsourcing do for you as a business?
- What do you need to consider when outsourcing?
- What are the common pitfalls that organizations have to face?
- What things should you do to reduce the risk of outsourcing going wrong?

So, as you can now fully appreciate, contact centers are highly complex operations that can be mastered if you have the right advice and guidance. To that end, we've recently explored **the basics of the modern contact center** — including **how to know whether your business needs one**, and, if so, **what type of center** is best suited to meet your specific operational needs.

Key Components of a Contact Center Operation

There are **6 key components** which should be integrated into the contact center operation:

1. Customer	4. Process
2. People	5. Location
3. Technology	6. Finance and business management

A change in any one of the above components will have a direct or indirect impact on every other part! Let's look at each of these elements in turn.

1. Customer

Customers can be anyone, and the Agent needs to have the skills to be able to adapt their style and vocabulary to suit different customer types. The Agent talks to more customers in any one day than any other person in the organization. If you want to know what is going on with customers, ask the Agents! With average call durations of less than 3 minutes, how do you form a relationship and build loyalty from a customer in that time. That is one of the biggest challenges that the Agents face, especially given many customers do not like the impersonal touch that center centers often provide.

2. People

People are the most critical asset in a contact center as it is they who really deliver the business performance. Unfortunately, the investment and perception of your staff may be rather poor. The people (Agents) often have to deal with difficult situations when things have gone wrong in your organization and deal with a large volume of centers that result, whilst not always having the necessary training or skills. However, the teams in centers can be very resilient and are often very social, making the center a great place to work. There are many different roles on offer and so they can a good environment to start and develop a career!

3. Technology

There are significant amounts of technology available and it is very easy to be bamboozled by it all! It very much depends on the size and nature of your business as to what you require. The basic equipment to handle centers is the Automated Center Distributor but these can range from basic to a Rolls Royce! Many centers do not fully utilize the technology that they have. In addition, there is usually a disjoint between what the technology can do and what it is actually used for!

4. Process

Every center has a multitude of processes, but the biggest challenge that it faces is to understand the end-to-end process from the customer perspective! The customer journey is what happens from the point in time when a customer decides to contact you through to the completion of that request or transaction. How long does this journey take and what does it feel like taking the steps along the way. How long is

spent waiting? Does the agent have the customer details to hand? Can the agent answer the query first time? Does the fulfilment when expected? Is there the need to contact the organization again because what was promised hasn't happened on time?

5. Location

Where a center is located is critical in terms of the cost of the building but more importantly the ability to recruit and retain employees to work in the center. The ease and cost to get to a center is important for those employed in the center but also in the integration with the Head Office functions that the center needs to work with. The facilities and working environment is more critical than for functional line departments because of the intensity with which the Agents have to sit at their desks and the need to manage resource patterns. Visiting a contact center and looking at how it might feel to work in it will be extremely telling as to how good the centers performance is, but also how the organization view and treat their employees. If you walk into a center, would you want your job to be based in that type of facility? If not, then why are you any different from others?

6. Finance and Business Management

There will be more management information statistics in a contact center than in any other part of the organization. The center is measured from every different angle but unfortunately, this does not always give a complete picture! One of the most challenging roles is the planning, measuring and reviewing of performance because so many centers are under pressure from centers and other expectations, that being able to step back and take an objective view maybe difficult. Most centers are run to very tight budgets so factors such as turnover of staff will have a huge impact.

One alternative that you may to consider is outsourcing. Outsourcing (also known as BPO) has become a hot topic in today's contact center business. What can outsourcing do for you as a business? What do you need to consider when outsourcing? What are the common pitfalls that organizations have to face? What things should you do to reduce the risk of outsourcing going wrong?

So as you can now fully appreciate, center centers are highly complex operations that can be mastered if you have the right advice and guidance.

Contact Center: Organizational structure

Globalization, advancements in tech, and Covid-19, have forced organizations to rethink their strategies and change the way they operate. When strategy changes, organizational structures, employee roles, and job functions should be realigned with the new objectives. If this does not happen, ambiguity, confusion, and a lack of accountability often follow.

In a contact center setting, this doesn't always happen. This, the experts say, isn't surprising since it is a complex process, and finding a practical approach to organizational design can be difficult. The reality, though, is that it could result in responsibilities being overlooked, inappropriate staffing, and people (even functions) working against each other. Organizations need to show people how to operate in a new structure as it dictates the relationship of roles, and therefore, how people function.

Poor organizational structure in the engine room from which all customer contacts are managed can trigger a baffling bayou of contradictions: confusion within roles, a lack of coordination among functions, reluctance to share ideas, and slow decision-making. Everyone must be clear on their roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication and redundancies that can impact your customer service operation and of course, costs.

Organizational structure – according to Peter Drucker, the late Austrian management consultant whose writings contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation – is an indispensable means, and a wrong structure will seriously impair business performance and may even destroy it. –Organizational structure must be so designed as to make possible the attainment of the objectives of the business for five, ten, or fifteen years hence.”

What then constitutes an effective contact center structure? How do you define team roles? What are the factors to consider? How are all these managed? This post will outline how to set up a contact center team without overburdening your core business functions.

Right Team: Roles and Responsibilities

A contact center consists of executive, managerial, supervisory, and staff positions – Call Centre Managers, Team Leaders, and Agents. The size of the center will determine the available positions, as well as the number of team leaders and additional support positions. They can have overlapping functions depending on the contact center size. Knowing the different team roles should guide you in slotting the right people in the right place at the right time.

The organizational structure of a contact center can vary depending on the size and complexity of the operation. However, there are some common roles and responsibilities found in most contact centers. Here is a basic outline of the organizational structure of a contact center:

- 1. Executive Level:** This is the highest level of management, consisting of the CEO, COO, CFO, and other top executives. They are responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of the company and providing guidance to the contact center leadership.
- 2. Contact Center Director:** This role oversees the entire contact center operation, including multiple teams and departments. The director is responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of customer service, managing the contact center budget, and providing strategic guidance to the team leaders.
- 3. Operations Management:** The operations manager is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the contact center. This includes managing agents, ensuring that performance targets are met, and making sure that the contact center is running smoothly.
- 4. Team Leaders:** The team leader is responsible for managing a group of agents within the contact center. They are responsible for ensuring that their team meets performance targets and providing coaching and guidance to their agents.
- 5. Quality Assurance:** The quality assurance team is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the performance of agents within the contact center. They ensure that agents are providing high-quality service to customers and that they are following the correct procedures.
- 6. Training and Development:** The training and development team is responsible for providing new agents with the necessary training to perform their roles effectively. They also provide ongoing training and development to help agents improve their skills and knowledge.
- 7. IT Support:** The IT support team is responsible for maintaining the technology and systems used within the contact center. They ensure that the systems are working properly and provide technical support to agents when needed.
- 8. Human Resources:** The human resources team is responsible for hiring new agents, managing employee benefits, and ensuring that the contact center is compliant with labor laws and regulations.
- 9. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs):** SMEs are experts in specific areas such as product knowledge, technical support, or billing. They provide additional support to CSRs and team leaders when complex issues arise that require specialized knowledge.
- 10. Agents or Customer Service Representatives (CSRs):** The bulk of staff in a contact center is made up of agents, also called Customer Service Representatives (CSRs). Agents or CSRs are responsible for interacting directly with customers, resolving their issues and concerns, and providing excellent customer service. Agent's or CSRs manage the frontline, receiving and responding to calls, emails, texts, and social media posts. They can be organized by channel or product/service type. They may be specialized in handling specific types of customer interactions or channels, such as technical support, billing, or sales.

Overall, the contact center organizational structure is designed to promote efficient and effective customer service delivery, with clear lines of communication and accountability at each level of the hierarchy.

Organize Clear Hierarchy

How you organize the different team roles is also critical to running a contact center smoothly—hierarchy shows who takes the lead at different levels, promoting a culture of accountability. Creating a hierarchy of team leaders and managers helps identify who makes the call at varying levels in a contact center structure. A clear hierarchy is also beneficial when escalating tickets. Tickets, typically, stop at the team leader's desk. In rare cases, a manager may step in to resolve complex cases. This structure ensures that unique customer issues are given careful consideration.

Organizing a clear hierarchy in a contact center is crucial for effective communication, decision-making, and overall performance. Here are some steps you can take to create a clear hierarchy in your contact center:

Define the roles and responsibilities: Start by defining the different roles and responsibilities within the contact center, including customer service representatives, team leaders, supervisors, and managers. Clarify the scope of each role, the level of authority, and the reporting structure.

Establish clear reporting lines: Ensure that reporting lines are clearly defined, and each employee knows who they report to and who they are accountable to. The reporting structure should be hierarchical, with clear lines of communication and authority.

Develop performance metrics: Develop performance metrics for each role and establish a clear set of expectations for each employee. This will help ensure that employees are accountable for their performance and that there is a clear measure of success for each role.

Create a training and development plan: Provide training and development opportunities for each role to help employees develop the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively. This will also help to create a clear career path for employees within the contact center.

Communicate the hierarchy: Ensure that the hierarchy is communicated clearly to all employees. This can be done through regular team meetings, training sessions, and a clear organizational chart that outlines the reporting structure.

Provide ongoing feedback: Provide ongoing feedback to each employee, including regular performance reviews, coaching, and mentoring. This will help to ensure that employees are motivated, engaged, and aligned with the overall goals of the contact center.

By following these steps, you can create a clear hierarchy in your contact center that promotes effective communication, decision-making, and overall performance. When creating a hierarchy, avoid redundant managerial functions. Leaving two people unclear of who is in charge leads to conflict or stagnation—the manager assumes the other manager is doing the task.



Information Sheet – 1.2.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to set up a contact center.

CONTACT CENTER SETUP REQUIREMENTS – The Checklist

Content Summary:

The importance of a contact center requirements checklist

Key Requirements to Setup a New Contact Center

1. Calculate the number of employees needed
2. Decide where your contact center should be located
3. Choose technology that matches your business needs
4. Set aside adequate time and resources
5. Hiring and training ahead of the grand opening
6. Building a good workplace culture in your new contact center

A successful contact center relies on many factors, but do you know how to make sure you have them in place? This checklist will discuss some of the most important things to consider when setting up your own contact center. We will also give you a checklist of requirements that should be included in order to ensure success.

The Importance of a Contact Center Requirements Checklist

It is simple to make sure that you are prepared. Having what is needed in advance will help keep your company running smoothly and efficiently, without facing any unnecessary hiccups or problems along the way. You can also use it as a list of items needed to start or expand the contact center.

If you use a contact center requirements checklist, you will not have to repeat the same processes twice, since you will already have covered all the most important aspects.

It can be hard for a company to get the hang of things right away. There are so many aspects that you must consider and keep in mind before starting up (including everything from hiring employees, renting space, or buying office equipment).

Using the checklist will help you track not only how much money is being spent, but the overall efficiency of your contact center. If so, this checklist will help you to setup your ideal contact center, detailing the requirements your business needs to consider when starting from scratch.

The following key requirements to keep in mind when opening a brand-new contact center:

1. Calculate the number of staff (Agents) needed
2. Decide where your contact center should be located
3. Choose technology that matches your business needs
4. Set aside adequate time and resources
5. Hiring and training ahead of the grand opening
6. Building a good workplace culture in your new contact center

Let's deep dive in detail:

1. Calculate the number of Staff (Agents) needed

Staffing calculation is also used as part of the long-term capacity planning process, informing the contact center's training and hiring programs, along with growth plans and estimated attrition rates.

This part we will cover in details in our Learning Outcome 2.1 - Determine number of agents for a contact center module. Under this module, In [Information sheet 2.1.7 HOW TO WORK OUT: How Many Staff You Need](#), we follow easy to use 9 Step Process to calculate the number of staff or agents in a contact center needed.

2. Decide where your contact center should be located

2.1 Think about the skills you are trying to attract

A good starting point is to think about the skills you are trying to attract into your business. For example, if you need multilingual employees, situating your contact center near an airport or big city can help you gain access to the skills you need. Whereas if you are putting on a local service for a specific area, you should consider employing people in that area who will already have an understanding of the local culture.

2.2 Close proximity to headquarters can help embed a strong brand identity

Your business may also benefit from setting up the new contact center in close proximity to company headquarters. This can help agents feel more aligned with the brand and the wider business, as well as create opportunities to take agents off the phones and into nearby factories, warehouses, or marketing departments.

2.3 Make sure it is easy for your employees to get to work

Another key consideration is to look at how your employees will get to work and how accessible your contact center is by car and public transport.

- Is there a bus stop or train station nearby?
- Do the bus and train timetables schedules align with your shift patterns?

Even if your contact center is offering amazing employment opportunities in the local area, you will struggle to hire people if they can't travel easily to work each day.

2.4 Do your research to make the most of your budget

It is also important to think about your budget when choosing a location for your contact center. The size and quality of office premises varies considerably across the country, so it is worth doing your research to find out where you can get the most for your money – without compromising on talent and accessibility.

3. Choose technology that matches your business needs

3.1 Focus your technology choices around the information you need to capture

A generic list of contact center technologies won't really help you make an informed decision about what your new operation will need. Instead, use an outside-in approach to help you make informed technology choices that are relevant to your business goals. Here are a handful of questions to take into consideration:

- What channels are my customers using?
- What knowledge do I need and where will it be stored?
- Do I need a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to build a case for my individual customers?
- Will I need to offer a segmented service? If so, how will I route my calls?

Once you have decided what you need, you should also consider how all of your systems are going to work together – and how they will form the user interface.

The basics-That aside, here is a list of core technologies we believe every new contact center should have (as of February 2023):

- **Agent Desktop**
- **ACD/ Call Routing**

- Predictive Dialer
- Headsets
- Call Recording
- Contact center Software
- Cloud Solutions
- Workforce Management and Workforce Optimization
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems

The 'nice to haves'

Here is a list of additional contact center technologies that can enhance the performance of your contact center and improve the customer experience:

1- Analytics	4- Scripting	7- Knowledge Management
2- Customer Surveys	5- E-learning	8- Performance Management
3- Call Back	6- Multilingual Customer Support	9- Quality Monitoring

For Detail, please read Information sheet 4.4.2 - Contact Center Technology Trends

3.2 You don't have to decide which headsets to use straight away

Headsets may be the first piece of technology that springs to mind when starting up a contact center. However, the exact make and model of your headsets is a decision that can be left until the later stages of the planning process. It can even be left until the very end, if you plan to trial several products in the first few weeks of opening your operation. The only decision you will need to plan for in advance is whether you want to use headsets with standard desk phones or computer-based telephony.

Map the customer journey and evaluate your processes

You should also set aside time to plan your customer journey and think about how your processes are going to work. It is far better to spot a time-consuming glitch in the planning stages than when you have 200 agents taking live calls.

3.4 Use Google Translate and stay professional while you gauge multilingual demand

If you aren't sure how many multilingual enquiries you will receive, one resourceful way to prepare for this, without undermining your professionalism, is to use Google Translate. You can then have "We're having this conversation using Google Translate", and "Would you prefer to have this conversation in English?" professionally translated. Your team can then do their best to handle these enquiries, without losing business, while you gain a sense of demand.

4. Set aside adequate time and resources

4.1 Rolling out a contact center usually takes around 6 months

Rolling out a contact center operation usually takes around 6 months. It is possible to roll out a contact center in 3 months (at a push). However, this isn't the best situation to be in as it puts everyone under a lot of pressure. However, these are only realistic time frames if the business processes have been properly developed and the operation's responsibilities have been mapped. It can take up to 2 years for a contact center to be set up from start to finish – as it is not unusual for the planning stage to take 18 months, followed by a 6-month rolling-out period. **But it can be done in less than a week....**

In a disaster recovery situation, if our business continuity plans become obsolete, there may be a need to speed up your plans to start a contact center from scratch. To do this, however, there isn't time to properly customize an on-premise solution. Instead, you will need to move to the cloud and take the guidance of an expert cloud provider.

4.2 You will need at least one person managing the project on a full-time basis

Setting up a new contact center isn't a sideline project. You will need to take at least one person out of their existing role to manage the project on a full-time basis. They will also need access to a team to bring the project to fruition within a realistic timeframe. Having proper processes and management in place is key to success.

4.3 Timing will also depend on the size of the contact center

The time it takes to complete your new contact center will also depend on the sheer size of the operation you are trying to build. This has more to do with the volume of work that needs to be completed rather than any increase in complexity. For example, the difference between a 50-seat operation and a 500-seat operation is that a further 450 people will need to be hired and trained. You will also require an additional 450 desks and phones to be installed, and so on.

4.4 A multichannel contact center may also take slightly longer

You need to consider the number of channels you need to install and build in extra time accordingly. It is far less time consuming to open a basic phone contact center compared with one that can handle social media, webchat and email. You will also have to factor in any extra training your agents might need to properly handle these additional channels.

4.5 Build in –buffer time” for delays and unexpected issues

With such a large project in hand, it is highly unlikely that everything will go to plan. To help overcome this, schedule in some –buffer time” during the rolling-out period for the inevitable delays and unknowns.

5. Hiring and training ahead of the grand opening

5.1 You need to think outside the box to hire and train agents without an office

If you are running to a tight schedule, it is likely that you will be hiring and training your new recruits before your new contact center building is ready to use. If this is the case, you will need to think outside the box to find a venue where these events can be held.

- Do you have a head office nearby with a spare conference room?
- Could you hire a room at a local hotel or college?
- Do you have a local Job Center Plus? They often have some space local businesses can use.

5.2 Interview off-site until everything is completely finished

Even if the building is safe to use but isn't quite finished, it is a good idea to interview and train your agents at a different location. You want to make a great first impression – especially if you are fighting for the best talent in your area – and ushering your interviewees through uncarpeted corridors probably won't cut it.

6. Building a good culture in your new contact center

6.1 You need a strong management team to support and motivate everyone

Starting a contact center from scratch doesn't stop once the phone lines are working! Maintaining and building a good company culture takes commitment from the top down. This is why it is important you have the right team leaders and managers in place who are involved in mentoring, motivating and supporting your agents. To get buy-in from the management team and ensure they work well together, you need to get them involved in the new contact center as soon as possible.

6.2 Base early performance targets on outcomes such as sales figures

To ensure that your new contact center is meeting its purpose and that you are achieving your goals, your early performance targets should be outcome-based. For example, based on the numbers of sales, or appointments made.

6.3 Customer-focused metrics can help with agent buy-in

You should also put a number of customer-focused metrics in place to get your team involved in meeting your performance targets. If your agents are directly focused on the customer, they will understand how their role feeds into the bigger picture. This will help to create a sense of purpose and buy-in amongst your front-line employees.

6.4 Good facilities will help make your contact center a great place to work

Providing good facilities for your employees is also important for driving a positive company culture. It can help to think of your new contact center as a university or college campus, needing a variety of amenities to support your community of workers. Basic considerations include on-site vending machines and cash machines, a well-stocked canteen, and a fun break-out room filled with pool tables, TVs and comfy sofas.

6.5 A phased transition can help everything settle before you go fully live

If you are moving an old contact center across to a new contact center, a phased transition can help address any “teething problems” before you go fully live. Your transition phase could last for up to 3 months, as you gradually pass all contacts from your old premises to your new premises. This has the added advantage of the old contact center being part of “the backup plan” in the event that something goes wrong on the new site. You can take a similar approach with a brand-new operation by bringing in new starters in waves, or starting up one channel at a time over the course of an introductory period.

Now, if you decide to use this contact center requirements checklist as a guide, you will be able to set up your own contact center without any issues and save both time and money in the process.

Contact Center Setup Requirement -The Check List

1	Calculate the number of Staff (Agents) needed	
	<i>[Calculate Staff Numbers through Nine-step process, Covering in Information sheet 2.1.7]</i>	
1.1	Step 1: Work Out How Many Calls Are Coming into the Business	
1.2	Step 2: Work Out the Number of Calls for Every 30 Minutes/Hour	
1.3	Step 3: Work Out Your Average Handling Time (AHT).	
1.4	Step 4: Determine Your Service Level.	
1.5	Step 5: Factor in Maximum Occupancy.	
1.6	Step 6: Calculate Your Shrinkage.	
1.7	Step 7: Work Out Your Average Patience.	
1.8	Step 8: Plug the Numbers into an Erlang Calculator.	
1.9	Step 9: Map Staff vs. Shift Patterns	
2	Decide where your contact center should be located	
2.1	Think about the skills you are trying to attract	
2.2	Close proximity to headquarters can help embed a strong brand identity	
2.3	Make sure it is easy for your employees to get to work	
2.4	Do your research to make the most of your budget	
3	Choose technology that matches your business needs	
3.1	Focus your technology choices around the information you need to capture	

3.2	You don't have to decide which headsets to use straight away	
3.3	Map the customer journey and evaluate your processes	
3.4	Use Google Translate and stay professional while you gauge multilingual demand	
4	Set aside adequate time and resources	
4.1	Rolling out a contact center usually takes around 6 months	
4.2	You will need at least one person managing the project on a full-time basis	
4.3	Timing will also depend on the size of the contact center	
4.4	A multichannel contact center may also take slightly longer	
4.5	Build in "buffer time" for delays and unexpected issues	
5	Hiring and training ahead of the grand opening	
5.1	You need to think outside the box to hire and train agents without an office	
5.2	Interview off-site until everything is completely finished	
6	Building a good workplace culture in your new contact center	
6.1	You need a strong management team to support and motivate everyone	
6.2	Base early performance targets on outcomes such as sales figures	
6.3	Customer-focused metrics can help with agent buy-in	
6.4	Good facilities will help make your contact center a great place to work	
6.5	A phased transition can help everything settle before you go fully live	



Information Sheet – 1.2.3

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Identify calls coming in and track their progress through the system for improving contact center process.

CONTACT CENTER PROCESS: A Blueprint

Content Summary:

Nine (9) Contact Center Process Blueprint:

1. Contact
2. Routing
3. Identification: the customer's profile and history.
4. Verification
5. Needs Assessment: history and profile to better understand the customer's situation.
6. Issue Resolution
7. Escalation
8. Follow-Up
9. Feedback

Understanding Call Arrival

How does a customer contact you?

Hold System

Service Levels

A contact center process blueprint is a diagram that outlines the different steps involved in the customer service process in a contact center. Here is a sample contact center process blueprint:

1. **Contact:** The customer initiates contact with the contact center through one of several channels, including phone, email, chat, or social media.
2. **Routing:** The contact is routed to the appropriate agent or team based on the customer's needs, the reason for contact, and the agent's skills and availability.
3. **Identification:** The customer is identified through a unique identifier, such as an account number or email address. The agent uses this information to access the customer's profile and history.
4. **Verification:** The agent verifies the customer's identity by asking for personal information or using a verification process, such as a PIN or security question.
5. **Needs Assessment:** The agent assesses the customer's needs by asking questions and listening to the customer's concerns. They also use the customer's history and profile to better understand the customer's situation.
6. **Issue Resolution:** The agent works to resolve the customer's issue or answer their question. This may involve providing information, troubleshooting a technical issue, or taking action to resolve a problem.
7. **Escalation:** If the agent is unable to resolve the customer's issue, they escalate the issue to a supervisor or another team with the necessary expertise.
8. **Follow-Up:** The agent follows up with the customer to ensure that the issue has been resolved and that the customer is satisfied with the service they received.
9. **Feedback:** The customer is given the opportunity to provide feedback on the service they received, which is used to improve the contact center's processes and performance.

This contact center process blueprint can be modified and customized to fit the specific needs and requirements of a contact center. The diagram can also be used to identify areas for improvement and optimize the contact center's performance.

Understanding Call Arrival

In a contact center system, the call flow arrival typically occurs when a customer initiates a call by dialing a designated phone number or clicking a call button on a website or mobile app.

Once the call is initiated, it is routed to the contact center system, which typically includes an automatic call distributor (ACD) that helps to distribute the call to the appropriate agent or department based on factors such as availability, skills, and priority.

The call flow arrival can also be triggered by other types of interactions, such as email or chat messages, depending on the channels supported by the contact center system. The timing of call flow arrival depends on various factors, such as the capacity of the contact center system and the level of customer demand. During peak times, call flow arrival may be more frequent, which can lead to longer wait times for customers and potentially longer handle times for agents.

To effectively manage call flow arrival, contact center systems may use tools such as call queuing, call back, and virtual hold to optimize the customer experience and reduce wait times. Additionally, the use of real-time monitoring and reporting can help contact center managers identify and address bottlenecks in call flow arrival and improve overall system performance.

How does a customer contact you?

When a customer calls or contacts the contact center, the system collects their customer data and creates a customer record. The call or contact is then routed to a queue, and the system checks for agent availability to assign an agent to the call. The call or contact is then sent to the assigned agent, who processes the call or contact and updates the customer record as needed. Finally, the call or contact ends, and the customer record is updated accordingly. This diagram illustrates the flow of data and activities involved in the customer contact process in a contact center.

Starting from the outside in. The process is probably something along the lines of:

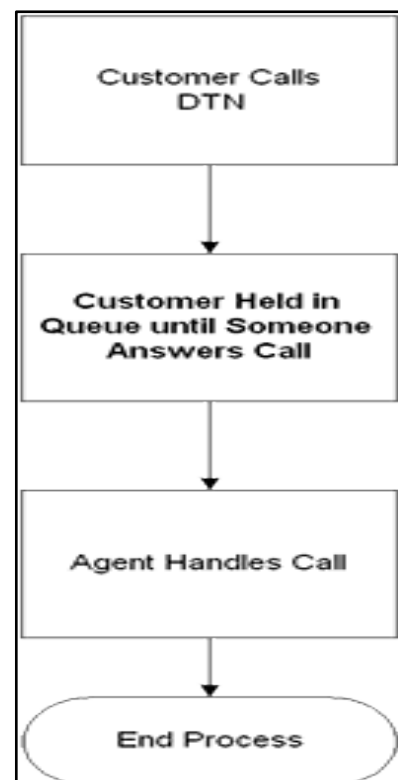
Customer calls – This is purely the design of the existing telephone call. It does not reflect any background process issues affecting the customer.

Agent handles call – With a simple process such as this, the call routing is easiest, and the customer has no idea of where they stand in relation to the rest of the calls arriving. Will they be answered in the next 10 seconds or is the wait going to be half an hour?

You all know as well as I do in this case the call is ALWAYS answered just as you decide to hang up and you hear the **“Hello, thank you for calling...”** just as you’ve gone past the point of no return in hanging up.

Although the system is simple, the scope for customer dissatisfaction is high. As with the staff rotation example above, a few simple changes can lead to massive results in goodwill, customer, and staff satisfaction.

Below are three examples of simple call routing changes (getting progressively more complex) that can be applied to most phone switches.

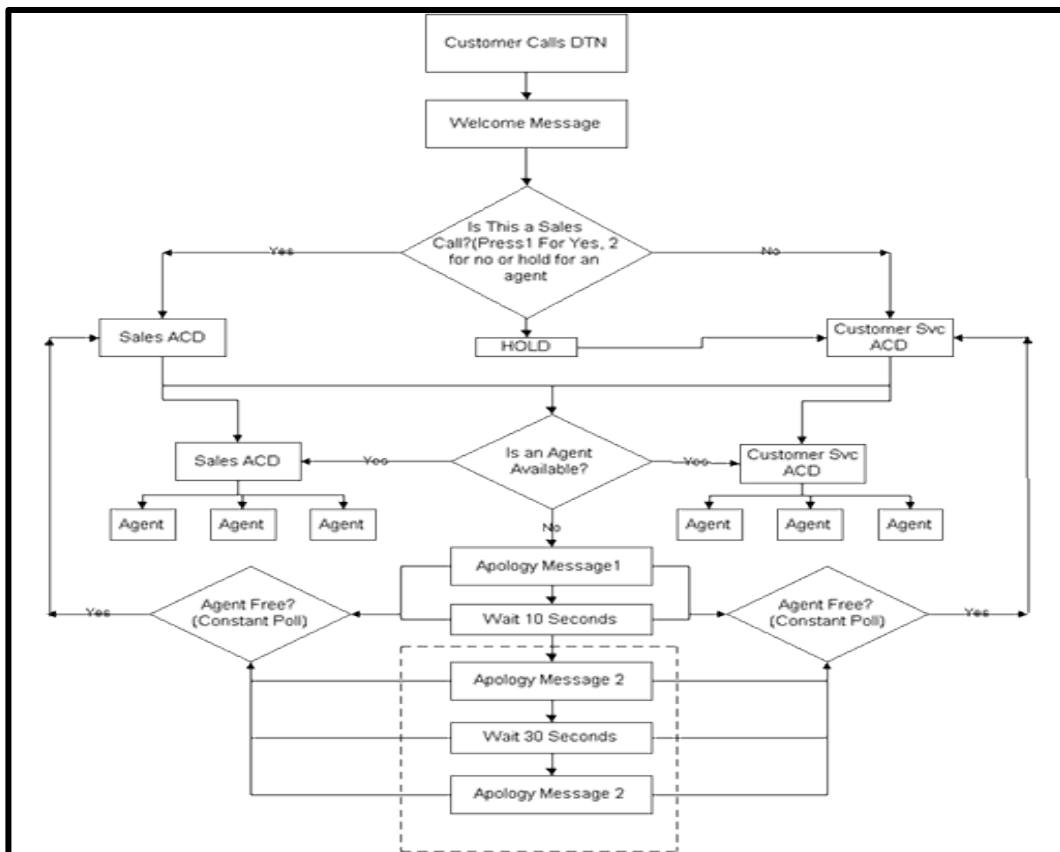


Hold system

The customer contacts the contact centre through a phone call, email, chat, or social media, and the contact is placed in a queue or on hold while the system routes the call to the appropriate agent or team based on the customer's needs. The system then notifies the agent when the customer is in the queue, and the agent answers the call or contact.

The diagram shows the basic steps involved in a hold system when a customer contacts a contact centre. After the customer contacts the contact centre, the call is placed on hold and the customer hears hold music or a message. The system then notifies the agent when the customer is on hold. The agent can then answer the call or contact and the call or contact ends when the issue is resolved.

Note the area in the dashed line is a loop until an agent is available. The timings are between messages and the agent availability check is continuous. Music can be added between the hold messages.



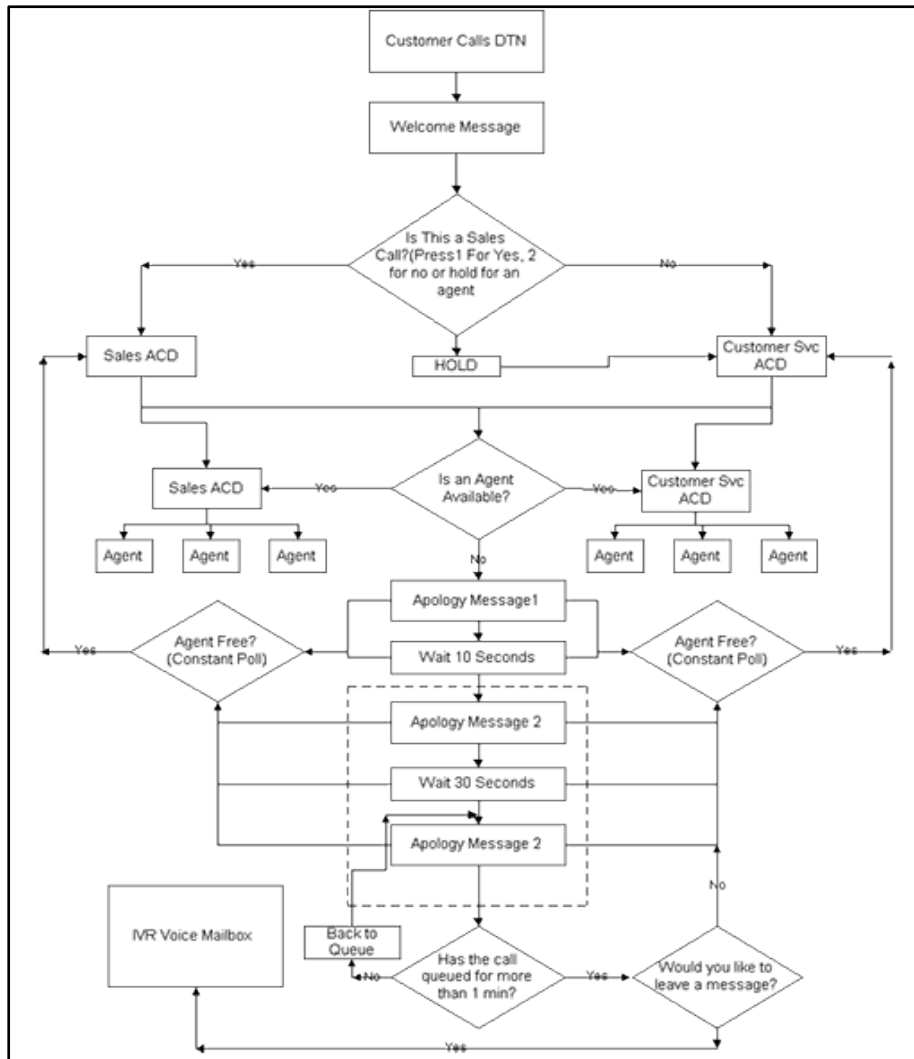
Below is a further refinement of the system giving the option for the customer to leave a message on an IVR (interactive voice response) system. This is the logical next step.

The diagram below is the last of the general call-flow ones. These models use the assumption that all teams are separate. Other call-flow manipulation could include:

- If the customer service team is busy, wait 20 seconds then check if a sales team member is free, if so route the call (and vice versa).
- If you have a high demand on one team and low on the other, calls can route to the low-demand team as an overflow.

Both these options, however, mean that the teams have to be cross-trained on the other's policies, procedures and scripting where required.

This is about as complex as most start-up contact centers need to get, and the above facilities should be available either as part of the main package or as a bolt-on to any switch made after about 1985. However, care needs to be taken in menu design. Nested menus, menus with four or more options, and overtly technical phrasing in the menu commands will ultimately drive abandon rates up.



Service Levels

The definition of service levels is a matter of great debate across the industry. Again, argument rages about what measures to use, how many to use and how they are to be set.

In moving from an initial direct calls system to a distributed call basis, it is probably prudent in the first instance to define a couple of levels then play around until you have them working properly. Then as time progresses you can become more elegant both with the technological use of your switch and with the levels and measures you are using to chart progress. **So, what service levels do we define?**

The conventional contact center target service level is: 80% [i.e., 80% of all answered calls to be answered in under 20sec]

Unfortunately, calculating call center service levels is a highly contentious issue. This is because the rate can easily be manipulated depending on the formula employed to calculate it. The details we will learn about Service Level in the **Information Sheet 2.1.6 The Most Common Contact Center KPI Metrics.**



Information Sheet – 1.2.4

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to identify essential contact center metrics to track by Team leaders to ensure success.

CONTACT CENTER METRICS AND KPIS: A deep dive

Content Summary:

What Are Contact Center Metrics? And What are KPIS?

Essential Contact Center Metrics in to 8 Distinct Categories to Track to Ensure Success

What Are Contact Center Metrics?

A successful contact center is one that keeps the customers happy, the agents productive, and the operations profitable. But without accurate numbers or valid data, you can only assume that customers are happy or that your agents are doing their best. This may lead to consistent losses or high agent attrition. Fortunately, contact center metrics and KPIS (including remote contact center metrics) quantify different aspects of contact center operations.

What are KPIS?

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a quantifiable measure that helps organizations track their progress toward achieving their key business objectives. By regularly monitoring KPIS, companies can determine if they're on track to reach their targets and make any necessary adjustments to their strategies. Think of KPIS like you would a life jacket: The jacket keeps you afloat, but it still requires you to swim to shore. KPIS (Key Performance Indicators) give you direct visibility into your data and trends, but at the end of the day you still need to put in action to improve on your numbers and keep those positive trends going forward.

33 Essential Contact Center Metrics to Track to Ensure Success

Managers must ensure that all center operations are constantly optimized to run at maximum efficiency. And they can do this by choosing and tracking the right set of ca center metrics and KPIS (Key Performance Indicators).

These metrics may also reveal patterns with regards to **customer experience, workforce management, and agent productivity**. Leaders and managers can use these insights to fine-tune the contact center processes further. Managers or Team leaders can then evaluate them to see how close or far they are from the intended values, as mentioned in the SLA (Service Level Agreement).

We have curated a list of unique Thirty-three must-watch contact center metrics and KPIS for leaders and managers, each of which is crucial for a contact center's success:

1	Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	12	Average Handling Time (AHT)	23	Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)
2	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	13	Average Speed of Answer (ASA)	24	Upsell Ratio
3	Customer Effort Score (CES)	14	Average After-Call Work Time (ACWT)	25	Redemption Rate
4	Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)	15	Abandonment Rate	26	Peak Hour Traffic
5	Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)	16	Occupancy Rate	27	Call Arrival Rate
6	Customer Churn Rate (CCR)	17	Utilization Rate	28	Cost Per Call (CPC)
7	Customer Retention Rate (CRR)	18	Shrinkage	29	Forecast accuracy
8	Customer acquisition cost (CAC)	19	Service Level	30	Quality Score
9	First Contact Resolution (FCR)	20	Absenteeism	31	Customer Loyalty
10	First Response Time (FRT)	21	Schedule Adherence Rate	32	Customer satisfaction
11	Average Resolution Time (ART)	22	Agent Attrition	33	Customer Experience

We've broken down these 33 most important contact center metrics in to Eight (8) distinct categories to track so you can ensure teams are maximizing productivity and operational efficiency and evaluate agent performance, boost your customer experience, find ways to improve your numbers, and make your customer service better.

1	Customer Satisfaction Metrics	5	Contact Center Operations Metrics
2	Customer Engagement Metrics	6	Agent Productivity Metrics
3	Customer Loyalty Metrics	7	Workforce Management (WFM) Metrics
4	Customer Experience Metrics	8	Contact Center Performance Tracking Metrics

1-Customer Satisfaction Metrics

Customer satisfaction is defined as a measurement to determine how happy your customers with your business are. Assessing client satisfaction helps you to identify the white and gray of your products, services, and solutions. Measuring customer satisfaction metrics gives you valuable insights into your overall business performance. Based on the insights you can enhance on the areas you are doing well and improve the areas having loopholes. The 3 matrices that are used by businesses for performance measurement to analyze the level of satisfaction in the overall customer journey.

2-Customer Engagement Metrics

Customer engagement metrics offer crucial insights into the experience customers have with a brand. While many focus on a north star metric to measure engagement – such as a net promoter score – there are many possibilities to track. These may transcend departments, from campaign open rates in marketing to first contact resolution in customer service. However, the most prominent customer engagement metrics expand beyond the confines of different departments, bringing everyone together with a single focus to facilitate a better experience. 5 Leading Customer Engagement Metrics typically align with the organization's vision.

3-Customer Loyalty Metrics

Loyalty is an emotion, which makes it a little tricky to measure. But by using X (Experience) and O (Operation) data metrics in tandem, your business can track customers showing loyal behaviors, and turn that data into actionable insights. Here are 8 metrics that can help you measure customer loyalty as part of a loyalty program.

4-Customer Experience Metrics

Customer experience can't be measured directly, but keeping track of the factors related to it gives us a good proxy. Customer experience metrics are just that – measurable indicators of a good, or bad, customer experience. And whilst measurement is not the goal, it can, and should, be used to gauge the improvements you make to the experience over time. Because customer experience is complex, it's a good idea to keep track of a variety of metrics in order to make sense of its different dimensions. In this section we'll round up the 10 key CX metrics that need to know about.

5- Contact Center Operations Metrics

Contact center operations metrics help companies understand contact center performance over time. Tracking 5 KPIs is crucial for executives to identify peak times, spot trends, and forecast staffing needs. Leadership uses contact center operations metrics to help them manage day-to-day operations and reach team goals.

6-Agent Productivity Metrics

To evaluate a contact/call center agent, you don't just want to answer the question, –Are they doing a good or bad job?" Agents face various issues and deal with different types of customers, so it's better to adopt a more holistic approach. Evaluate how much effort agents put in and how they resolve customer issues by monitoring 6 certain agent performance metrics.

7-Workforce Management (WFM) Metrics

Workforce management (WFM) is having the right people working on the right things at the right time. WFM metrics and analytics lets you know if you're doing it well. And doing WFM well can optimize your support agents' productivity, reduce turnover and improve dramatically your customers' experience and satisfaction. But there are some essential metrics in managing your customer-facing teams. If you're just getting started with WFM, there are the 11 metrics that you should learn about first.

8-Performance Tracking Metrics

When it comes to contact center performance management, it's crucial that you know your metrics. By tracking the right metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), you can ascertain how your contact center is performing overall. As there are a multitude of possible metrics, it can be difficult to know which ones to focus on. Tracking them all is an impractical and impossible task -so you need to be strategic and choose your metrics wisely. **By tracking the 11 right metrics** and key performance indicators (KPIs), you can ascertain how your contact center is performing overall.

Tracking the right metrics can dramatically improve contact center performance on every count. But with hundreds of KPIs around, it can be challenging to pick the right ones for your contact center. Now, in following you have an essential list of thirty-three contact center metrics to choose from:

A	Customer Satisfaction Metrics:	D	Customer Experience (CX) Metrics:	G	Workforce Management (WFM) Metrics
1	Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	1	Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	1	Average Handling Time (AHT)
2	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	2	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	2	Abandonment Rate
3	Customer Effort Score (CES)	3	Customer Effort Score (CES)	3	Occupancy
B	Customer Engagement Metrics:	4	Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)	4	Utilization
1	Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	5	Customer Churn Rate (CCR)	5	Shrinkage
2	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	6	Customer Retention Rate (CRR)	6	Service Level
3	Customer Effort Score (CES)	7	First Contact Resolution (FCR)	7	Absenteeism
4	Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)	8	First Response Time (FRT)	8	Schedule Adherence
5	Customer Churn Rate (CCR)	9	Average Resolution Time (ART)	9	Agent Attrition
C	Customer Loyalty Metrics:	E	Contact Center Operations metrics	10	Forecast accuracy
1	Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	1	Abandonment Rate	H	Performance Tracking Metrics
2	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	2	Peak Hour Traffic	1	Customer acquisition cost (CAC)
3	Customer Effort Score (CES)	3	Call Arrival Rate	2	First Contact Resolution (FCR)
4	Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)	4	Cost Per Call (CPC)	3	First Response Time (FRT)
5	Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)	5	Quality Score	4	Average Handling Time (AHT)
6	Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)	F	Agent Productivity Metrics	5	Abandonment Rate
7	Upsell Ratio	1	Average Handling Time (AHT)	6	Service Level
8	Redemption Rate	2	Average Speed of Answer (ASA)	7	Peak Hour Traffic
		3	Average After-Call Work Time (ACWT)	8	Call Arrival Rate
		4	Occupancy Rate	9	Cost Per Call (CPC)
		5	Utilization Rate	10	Forecast accuracy
		6	Schedule Adherence Rate	11	Quality Score



Self-Check Quiz- 1.2.1 to 1.2.4

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions:

Question 1: What is a Contact Center?

Question 2: Describe the types of Contact Center?

Question 3: What is a Cloud Contact Center?

Question 4: What is Contact Center as a Service (CaaS)?

Question 5: What are the 5 Essential Contact Center Services?

Question 6: What are the 3 Essential Benefits of Contact Center?

Question 7: What are the most common Technologies Used in a Contact Center?

Question 8: What are the key components that are integrated into the Contact Center operation?

Question 9: What are the common roles found in Contact Center organization structure?

Question 10: Describe about key importance of a contact center requirements checklist?

Question 11: Explore the category of contact center requirements checklist?

Question 12: Which software to use for contact center business?

Question 13: What is the Industry Standard of Contact Center service level?



Answer Key – 1.2.1 to 1.2.4

Answer 1:

A contact center is the business division that handles communications with a business's customers. Typically, the contact center is staffed with customer service agents who interact with customers over various channels, often including call, email, text, live chat, voice over IP (VOIP), and social media.

Answer 2:

However, contact centers typically fall into one of the following categories: **omnichannel, multichannel, inbound, outbound, and blended.**

Answer 3:

A cloud contact center, often referred to as cloud contact center software, is a centralized, online platform that handles all outbound and inbound customer communications across multiple channels. These software solutions provide customer service teams with cloud-based services and tools that help them manage agents, automate tasks, distribute calls and messages, track and analyze data, and much more.

Answer 4:

Contact center as a service (CcaaS) is a cloud-based customer communication solution that allows businesses to buy only the tools they currently need from the software provider. With CcaaS, businesses can set up their contact center faster than if they were to create an on-premise center. With CcaaS there is no need for internal hardware or IT. All the tools are in the cloud, and the provider is responsible for troubleshooting any issues.

Answer 5: The 5 Essential Contact Center Services are:

1. Telephone Service
2. Text Messaging Service (SMS)
3. Chat Service
4. Social Media Service
5. Email Service

Answer 6: The 3 Essential Benefits of Contact Center are:

1. Enhanced Customer Experience
2. Increased Agent Efficiency
3. Better Business Insights

Answer 7: Below are introductions to the most common technologies used in a contact center:

- Automatic Call Distribution
- Customer Relationship Management System
- Computer Telephony Integration
- Predictive Dialers
- Call Recording Systems
- Interactive Voice Response

Answer-8: There are **6 key components** which should be integrated into the contact center operation:

1. Customer
2. People
3. Technology
4. Process
5. Location
6. Finance and business management

Answer 9: Here is a common role of the organizational structure of a contact center:

- Senior Management
- Operations Management
- Team Leaders
- Quality Assurance
- IT Support
- Training and Development
- Human Resource
- Agent

Answer 10: Key importance of a contact center requirements checklist as follows:

Using the checklist will help you track not only how much money is being spent, but the overall efficiency of your contact center. If so, this checklist will help you to setup your ideal contact center, detailing the requirements your business needs to consider when starting from scratch.

Answer 11: The category of contact center requirements checklist?

- Calculate the number of employees needed
- Decide where your contact center should be located
- Choose technology that matches your business needs
- Set aside adequate time and resources
- Hiring and training ahead of the grand opening
- Building a good workplace culture in your new contact center

Answer 12: The Basic software to use for contact center business are:

- Agent Desktop
- ACD/ Call Routing
- Predictive Dialler
- Cloud Solutions
- Workforce Management and Workforce Optimization
- Call Recording
- Headsets
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems
- Contact center Software

Answer 13:

Target service level: 80% (i.e., 80% of all answered calls to be answered in under 20sec – the conventional contact center target service level)



Learning Outcome 1.3 - Interpret customer service leadership



CONTENTS:

- UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP:** Why Need Leadership in Contact Center.
- TEAM LEADERSHIP IN CONTACT CENTER:** What Makes a Great Team Leader?
- TEAM LEADERSHIP IN CONTACT CENTER:** Roles & Responsibility of Team Leader.
- TEAM LEADERSHIP IN CONTACT CENTER:** Establishing KPIs in Contact Center.
- TEAM LEADERSHIP IN CONTACT CENTER:** How to Develop.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Traits of a leader are interpreted.
2. Role and responsibilities of team leader are described.
3. 3-P operational framework is interpreted.
4. Procedures to develop capacity of a team leader are explained.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

Workplace (actual or simulated).

Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.

Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activity – 1.3

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
1.3 Interpret customer service leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheets: 1.3.1 to 1.3.4 • Self-Check Quiz: 1.3.1 to 1.3.4 • Answer keys: 1.3.1 to 1.3.4



Information Sheet – 1.3.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Identify the key traits needed for great team leadership in a contact center.

Content Summary:

Importance of Contact Center Team Leaders

9 Traits of Effective Leadership in Contact Center

1. They've Developed a Critical Leadership Behavior: Accountability
2. They Develop Trusting Stakeholder Relationships
3. They Focus on Pulling, Not Pushing
4. They Are Proactive and Pre-empt Future Issues
5. They Have Strong Coaching Capability
6. They Have a Service and Organization Mindset
7. They Are Evidence and Insight Driven
8. They Don't Shy Away from Underperformance or Behavioral Issues
9. They Wear a Customer Experience Hat

TEAM LEADERSHIP IN CONTACT CENTER: What Makes a Great Team Leader?

Team leaders direct and guide individuals with the intent of achieving a particular goal. For example, a customer service team leader may oversee a team throughout the completion and execution of a customer-focused strategy. These roles aren't necessarily in a management role, but rather oversee a team and then report the team's progress and results to a manager. Team leaders monitor the progress of a team throughout the duration and successful completion of a project.

A contact center team leader is someone who consistently shows a customer-focused approach to service within an organization. Team Leaders in contact center guide others with the mindset that excellence in serving customers starts with how company leaders act. Leaders who are focused on customer service create an environment where team members are immersed in a strategic vision for meeting client needs. These leaders support employees by giving them the tools to successfully manage customer interactions, such as high-quality training, clear objectives and templates for addressing customer feedback.

They may work as part of the team and complete tasks related to the project as well as lead the team. These professionals must also be able to effectively motivate team members to accomplish goals and complete tasks in a timely and efficient manner. When team members are motivated to take part in the achievement of a goal, they are better able to function as a team and work towards a common solution.

Importance of Contact Center Team Leaders

High quality leaders are the backbone of every organization. Unfortunately, 77% of organizations struggle to find people who can lead.

Without a solid leadership team, companies can have a hard time accomplishing even the most basic tasks: hiring good employees, bringing in customers, and increasing profit. That's because leaders are the individuals who inspire and motivate your company to go from A to Z.

Contact center team leaders are no different.

Contact center team leaders who are uninspiring and ineffective can have an extremely negative impact on their direct reports. According to [Forbes](#), the **least** inspiring and motivated leaders cause 47% of their direct reports to think about quitting, and 93% of the time they rate in the bottom 10% for productivity.

On the other hand, good contact center team leaders are responsible for:

- Maintaining your organization's vision and goals
- Inspiring employee morale, which decreases employee turnover
- Communicating new strategic directives while ensuring compliance
- Motivating employees to perform better and be more productive
- Providing the appropriate tools and resources to produce quality work

We look at the skills needed for great team leadership and where a good team leader focuses most of their time in helping to run a contact center in the next **information sheet 1.3.2**.

9 Traits of Effective Leadership in Contact Center

Here we share following 9 traits that makes team leaders high performing, with practical tips for how you can put these traits into practice from today:

1. They've Developed a Critical Leadership Behavior: Accountability
2. They Develop Trusting Stakeholder Relationships
3. They Focus on 'Pulling', Not 'Pushing'
4. They Are Proactive and Pre-empt Future Issues
5. They Have Strong 'Coaching' Capability
6. They Have a Service and Organization Mindset
7. They Are Evidence and Insight Driven
8. They Don't Shy Away from Underperformance or Behavioral Issues
9. They Wear a Customer Experience Hat

1. They've Developed a Critical Leadership Behavior: Accountability

Working in customer services isn't for the faint hearted, right? It can be fast paced, and the effective running of customer service team can be reliant on many dependencies seemingly out of our control.

You can control and influence everything. High-performing team leaders have the ability not to get stuck in the 'moaning mud', by not wasting energy and time being negative and waiting for things to sort themselves out. Instead, they take ownership, find solutions, and make things happen. This behavior is often the secret ingredient for team leaders wanting to get promoted to more senior positions.

Practical Tips:

- Recognize when you're being negative and showing unaccountable behaviors.
- When you're faced with a challenging situation, take a moment to think about all the possible things (however small) you can do to change the situation. Take time to reflect. There could be other more positive ways to tackle something.
- Research and use the incredibly useful 'accountability ladder', this tool will support you in moving yourself up the ladder to more accountable behaviors.

2. They Develop Trusting Stakeholder Relationships

High-performing team leaders focus on building open and trusting two-way relationships with their key stakeholders across the organization. This is achieved through both formal and informal regular conversations, with a focus on working together to improve the customer experience.

Practical Tips:

- Build your own stakeholder map and identify two key relationships to focus on.
- Don't just contact your stakeholders when you need something or when something goes wrong.
- Schedule regular 'check-in' sessions to help develop the relationship.
- Be clear on what you value from that stakeholder, and what you'd like to work with them on.
- Equally, it's an opportunity to gain feedback about your team from their perspective.

3. They Focus on Pulling', Not Rushing'

This is about focusing your energy on activities that motivate and engage your team that pull' them towards you.

This can include building deeper relationships with your team members by focusing on their personal development and getting to know them: What are their hobbies? What's going on for them outside of work?

This is much more effective in increasing engagement and productivity than simply focusing on their operational metrics.

Practical Tips:

- Review your calendar and identify which activities and how much time you're currently investing in team engagement.
- Understand the key drivers of dis-engagement within your team, and work through them with the team – empowering them to take ownership of the initiatives.
- Examples of pulling' activities:
 - ensure your team have a voice and can get involved in improvement projects and other organization-wide initiatives,
 - remove barriers that prevent the team from serving the customer,
 - give each of your team members something to lead on in addition to their core role (e.g. subject matter expert on a specific service/product, social lead or process improvement lead),
 - focus on personal development and developing career pathways.



It is important to motivate and engage your team to pull' them towards you

4. They Are Proactive and Pre-empt Future Issues

We can all think about that unexpected busy day the contact center has faced. A high-performance team leader isn't just about being great at reacting quickly and effectively to these challenging days and ensuring the impact on the customer is limited through real-time mitigations.

They are one step ahead because they anticipate future issues and put mitigation plans in place to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

A few examples of how this can be achieved are: having strong stakeholder relationships which will enable you to influence outbound communications that may have a negative impact on contact demand or being part of the sign-off process before communications are published, enabling a customer' voice to be part of the final communications.

Practical Tips:

- Schedule time in your diary &/or in management meetings to think about and discuss potential obstacles in the short and long term that the customer services team may face.
- Log and track these issues with mitigations that can be implemented to limit the impact. Record lessons learnt when issues arise so they can be handled effectively next time.
- Contact centers are data rich – use this data to identify trends that can help plan resourcing and workload/

5. They Have Strong Coaching Capability

They have the ability and confidence to create time for coaching conversations, supporting team members, and increasing agent capability.

Pitched in the right way, this will help you create followers and dedicated agents who feel you invest time supporting them to become better.

They create a culture within their teams where coaching happens in both formal and informal situations and encourage agents to coach each other depending on the learning need.

Practical Tips:

- Develop your coaching muscles – read, listen, and practice. One easy way to practice this if you're a beginner is to focus your first coaching conversation on the great things an agent does. This will support you in feeling more confident and comfortable having this style of conversation.
- Think about what a great coaching conversation might look like.
- Focus on creating a coaching culture, with the team knowing this is to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Match two agents together who can both learn from each other and start peer-to-peer coaching.
- Set expectations on the behaviors you would like to see during coaching conversations – ownership, accountability and listening.

6. They Have a Service and Organization Mindset

High-performance team leaders don't just look after their individual team but proactively contribute to the wider department by supporting and collaborating with other teams. They are aware of what's happening across the department and actively involved in organization-wide initiatives.

This supports them in boosting their personal profile and the contact center and supports them to have a wider understanding on how the organization operates.

Practical Tips:

- Invest time in keeping in touch with what's happening across the organization: reading newsletters, intranet articles and being active in organizational initiatives.
- Reach out to your fellow team leaders and see if you can support them with issues they are currently facing.

7. They Are Evidence and Insight Driven

High-performance team leaders have a clear and deep understanding of data and insight. They can confidently discuss themes, trends in performance, demand, and customer insight. They can turn data into actionable insight for their service and the wider organization.

This insight allows for more productive evidence-based stakeholder conversations, which enables you to focus on what matters rather than the most recent issue, which may be low impact on the customer.

Practical Tips:

- Understand your customer insight – why are customers contacting you? What periods in the day/week/month have the highest demand? What is driving dissatisfaction?
- Understand your team insight – what are the key development/training gaps in your team?
- If you had one minute with the CEO to discuss key insights about your team, what would you say.

1. They Don't Shy Away from Underperformance or Behavioral Issues

This is without doubt one of the more difficult activities any manager must do. High performance is tackling this early on – whether it's capability or disciplinary, they ensure poor behavior doesn't spread across the team and clearly role model a minimum standard.

High-performing team leaders clearly demonstrate and communicate to the team what underperformance looks like and how agents make progress towards performing and high performance.

Not tackling performance and behavioral issues can be one of the key reasons for low team engagement, as other performing team members start to feel demotivated that someone is **'getting away'** with it. This can undermine your ability to gain respect from your team.

Practical Tips:

- Be courageous and take the step in having that difficult performance conversation. If you're new to this, find a mentor who can support you in developing your confidence with having these types of conversations.
- Be clear with your team about your performance expectations and **'bring your team with you'** by developing a clear picture of what underperformance looks like in practice. This can be co-created with your team to enhance engagement and buy-in.
- Reward team members who role model the right behaviors to encourage and inspire others.

2. They Wear a Customer Experience Hat

High-performance team leaders think and consider the customer experience. They achieve this by always seeking ways to improve the end-to-end journey, rather than just handling a conversation well or hitting your team operational targets.

They regularly identify improvements to the customer journey, and actively take ownership on driving the improvement through to completion.

They don't just see a contact as a transaction but think more widely around the reason the customer contacted and how that experience could be improved.

Practical Tips:

- Gain an understanding of how the customer experience could be improved – are people contacting due to a confusing online journey? Did they receive a communication that wasn't clear?
- Test out the experience yourself – walk in the customer's shoes and be a **'customer'** of your organization.

After doing this over the years, you have learned that to create truly amazing team leaders you need to develop an effective training process incorporating the above nine traits.



Self-Check Quiz – 1.3.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: What are 9 traits a contact center team leader should possess?

Question-2: Which practical tips are you going to use when considering the need to coach an agent?

Question-3: Which practical tips are you going to use while consider the data and insight?

Question-4: Which practical tips are you going to use while not tackling performance and behavioral issues?

Question-5: Which practical tips are you going to use while consider the customer experience?



Answer Key – 1.3.1

Answer-1: Here we share following 9 traits that makes team leaders high performing:

1. They've Developed a Critical Leadership Behavior: Accountability
2. They Develop Trusting Stakeholder Relationships
3. They Focus on Pulling, Not Pushing
4. They Are Proactive and Pre-empt Future Issues
5. They Have Strong Coaching Capability
6. They Have a Service and Organization Mindset
7. They Are Evidence and Insight Driven
8. They Don't Shy Away from Underperformance or Behavioral Issues
9. They Wear a Customer Experience Hat

Answer-2:

- Develop your coaching muscles – read, listen, and practice. One easy way to practice this if you're a beginner is to focus your first coaching conversation on the great things an agent does. This will support you in feeling more confident and comfortable having this style of conversation.
- Think about what a great coaching conversation might look like.
- Focus on creating a coaching culture, with the team knowing this is to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Match two agents together who can both learn from each other and start peer-to-peer coaching.
- Set expectations on the behaviors you would like to see during coaching conversations – ownership, accountability and listening.

Answer-3:

- Understand your customer insight – why are customers contacting you? What periods in the day/week/month have the highest demand? What is driving dissatisfaction?
- Understand your team insight – what are the key development/training gaps in your team?
- If you had one minute with the CEO to discuss key insights about your team, what would you say?

Answer-4:

- Be courageous and take the step in having that difficult performance conversation. If you're new to this, find a mentor who can support you in developing your confidence with having these types of conversations.
- Be clear with your team about your performance expectations and bring your team with you' by developing a clear picture of what underperformance looks like in practice. This can be co-created with your team to enhance engagement and buy-in.
- Reward team members who role model the right behaviors to encourage and inspire others.

Answer-5:

- Gain an understanding of how the customer experience could be improved – are people contacting due to a confusing online journey? Did they receive a communication that wasn't clear?
- Test out the experience yourself – walk in the customer's shoes and be a customer of your organization.



Information Sheet – 1.3.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to identify roles & responsibilities of Team Leaders in a contact center.

Roles & Responsibilities of Team Leaders

Content Summary:

Roles & Responsibilities of Team Leaders

Four key imperatives

1. **Lead** – Aligning people behind a vision of how to serve customers and setting expectations.
2. **Engage** – Getting the team to enjoy their work in a way that also improves customer experience.
3. **Perform** – Helping the team get better and setting targets that link to the service vision.
4. **Connect** – Connecting with people across the organization to improve business performance.

Contact Center Team Leader: Required Skills

A Contact Center Team Leader is responsible for managing and leading a team of customer service representatives to ensure that the customer service operations of the company run smoothly.

The roles and responsibilities of a Contact Center Team Leader include:

1. **Managing the team:** The Team Leader is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the team. This includes setting performance goals, monitoring progress, and providing coaching and feedback to team members to help them achieve their goals.
2. **Motivating the team:** The Team Leader must inspire and motivate team members to perform their best, especially during challenging times. This involves recognizing individual and team achievements and providing encouragement and support when needed.
3. **Ensuring quality customer service:** The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that team members provide excellent customer service to callers. This may involve monitoring calls or other interactions to ensure that customers are being treated courteously and professionally.
4. **Monitoring performance:** The Team Leader must track and evaluate the performance of team members to ensure they are meeting performance standards and goals. This involves analyzing data and metrics related to customer service, sales, and other key performance indicators.
5. **Coaching and training:** The Team Leader is responsible for training new team members and providing ongoing coaching and support to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to succeed in their roles.
6. **Handling escalated issues:** The Team Leader may be called upon to handle escalated issues or complaints from customers that cannot be resolved by front-line customer service representatives.
7. **Collaborating with other teams:** The Team Leader must work closely with other teams within the company, such as the IT department, to ensure that all aspects of the customer service operation are functioning effectively and efficiently.
8. **Reporting and analysis:** The Team Leader is responsible for compiling data and generating reports that provide insight into the performance of the team and the overall success of the customer service operation. These reports may be used to inform management decisions and identify areas for improvement.

On top of this, a leader may also have to think about how data is managed to help the business grow and change, as well as how it is communicated to the rest of the organization. So, there is the question of

how team leaders can balance all of these responsibilities, without losing their key focus on supporting agents.

A contact center team leader is in charge of improving employee engagement, boosting agent performance and overseeing change management. This all helps to deliver **customer satisfaction**.

Yet there are many more responsibilities that a team leader may have some input in. These can be grouped within **four key imperatives**:

1. **Lead** – Aligning people behind a vision of how to serve customers and setting expectations.
2. **Engage** – Getting the team to enjoy their work in a way that also improves customer experience.
3. **Perform** – Helping the team get better and setting targets that link to the service vision.
4. **Connect** – Connecting with people across the organization to improve business performance.

While team leaders only have a small part to play in some of these tasks, we are already seeing a shift in who “owns” each responsibility, according to Natalie Calvert, founder of CX High Performance, who shared the below chart.

The chart below highlights how team leader responsibilities can be grouped within these **four imperatives**, providing a new and interesting view on

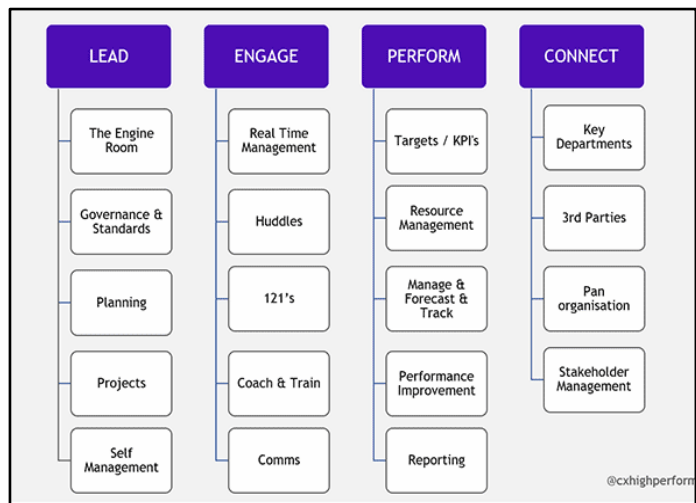
Natalie Stated:

“A lot of the „LEAD’ role will be taken by technology.

The „CONNECT’ role will be taken over by better integration and knowledge systems, while the „PERFORM” side will also be taken over a lot by analytics systems and automated technologies,”

*“So, where the team leader role really starts to have a massive impact is in **ENGAGE** people.”*

We must remember that the most important responsibility of a team leader is in understanding employee engagement and applying it to achieve better performance results.



Let us take a closer look at some of the key engagement responsibilities of a team leader:

- **Real-Time Management** – Supporting agents across all channels and motivating the team.
- **Holding Team Huddles** – Huddles are used to bring people together, give key messages and spread good energy.
- **1-2-1s** – These can be used formally and informally to support performance improvement, develop progression goals, discuss challenges and create stronger, more personal relationships.
- **Coach and Train** – Helping agents on live calls, developing targeted training exercises and supporting the quality team in delivering an excellent customer experience.
- **Communication** – Liaising with other departments to solve issues and reduce silo working to ensure a better way of working.

While some team leaders, particularly in larger contact centers, will mostly be in charge of the **engagement** part of things – others will be asked to take on additional responsibility. These leaders will have more of a strategic role.

In some contact centers, a strategic team leader would be expected to help the manager in understanding:

- **Customer Experience** – Instead of looking at the feedback at the end of an interaction, leaders may be expected to know where contact lies within the customer journey and the implications it has.

- **Employee Experience** – This doesn't just involve thinking about how to engage your employees on a weekly and monthly basis; you can map out the employee journey and plan out a much more engaging experience for them.
- **Return on Investment (ROI)** – What value are you delivering in terms of ROI? For every customer interaction, what is the ROI your team delivers back to the business? This goes beyond cost cutting.
- **Technology** – Do you understand the technology that's available today, as well as what is just around the corner? What would help to best support your agents?

Contact Center Team Leader: Required Skills

Contact center team leaders are responsible for managing and leading a team of customer service representatives to ensure that the customer service operations of the company run smoothly. The following are the skills that a contact center team leader should possess:

1. **Communication skills:** Strong communication skills are essential for a contact center team leader. They must be able to communicate clearly and effectively with team members, customers, and other stakeholders.
2. **Leadership skills:** A contact center team leader must have strong leadership skills to inspire and motivate team members to perform their best. They should be able to lead by example, and create a positive work environment that encourages teamwork and collaboration.
3. **Customer service skills:** Contact center team leaders should have excellent customer service skills and be able to resolve complex customer issues. They should be able to handle irate customers and diffuse challenging situations.
4. **Problem-solving skills:** A contact center team leader should have excellent problem-solving skills to identify and resolve issues that may arise within the team or with customers. They should be able to think creatively and outside the box to come up with innovative solutions.
5. **Time management skills:** Contact center team leaders must be able to manage their time effectively, prioritize tasks, and meet deadlines. They should be able to multitask and work efficiently under pressure.
6. **Analytical skills:** A contact center team leader should be able to analyze data and metrics related to customer service, sales, and other key performance indicators. They should be able to use this data to identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions.
7. **Coaching and mentoring skills:** Contact center team leaders should have strong coaching and mentoring skills to train new team members and provide ongoing support to help them succeed in their roles. They should be able to provide constructive feedback and encourage professional development.
8. **Technical skills:** Contact center team leaders should be proficient in using contact center software, databases, and other technology tools required for the job. They should be able to troubleshoot technical issues and provide support to team members.

In summary, a contact center team leader should possess excellent communication, leadership, customer service, problem-solving, time management, analytical, coaching and mentoring, and technical skills to effectively manage a team of customer service representatives.



Self-Check Quiz – 1.3.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: What are the key roles and responsibilities of contact center team leader?

Question-2: What and how team leader responsibilities can be grouped within four imperatives?

Question-3: What is the key engagement responsibilities of a team leader?

Question-4: What is the common understanding for contact center strategic team leader?



Answer Key – 1.3.2

Answer-1: The key roles and responsibilities of contact center team leader:

1. Managing the team:
2. Motivating the team:
3. Ensuring quality customer service:
4. Monitoring performance:
5. Coaching and training:
6. Handling escalated issues
7. Collaborating with other teams:
8. Reporting and analysis:

Answer-2: Team leader responsibilities can be grouped within these four imperatives

5. **Lead** – Aligning people behind a vision of how to serve customers and setting expectations.
6. **Engage** – Getting the team to enjoy their work in a way that also improves customer experience.
7. **Perform** – Helping the team get better and setting targets that link to the service vision.
8. **Connect** – Connecting with people across the organization to improve business performance.

Answer-3: The key engagement responsibilities of a team leader:

- **Real-Time Management** – Supporting agents across all channels and motivating the team.
- **Holding Team Huddles** – Huddles are used to bring people together, give key messages and spread good energy.
- **1-2-1s** – These can be used formally and informally to support performance improvement, develop progression goals, discuss challenges and create stronger, more personal relationships.
- **Coach and Train** – Helping agents on live calls, developing targeted training exercises and supporting the quality team in delivering an excellent customer experience.
- **Communication** – Liaising with other departments to solve issues and reduce silo working to ensure a better way of working.

Answer-4: The common understanding for contact center strategic team leader:

- **Customer Experience** – Instead of looking at the feedback at the end of an interaction, leaders may be expected to know where contact lies within the customer journey and the implications it has.
- **Employee Experience** – This doesn't just involve thinking about how to engage your employees on a weekly and monthly basis; you can map out the employee journey and plan out a much more engaging experience for them.
- **Return on Investment (ROI)** – What value are you delivering in terms of ROI? For every customer interaction, what is the ROI your team delivers back to the business? This goes beyond cost cutting.
- **Technology** – Do you understand the technology that's available today, as well as what is just around the corner? What would help to best support your agents?



Information Sheet – 1.3.3

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to identify which KPIs are important to team leaders and how to measure them to successfully run a contact center.

Content Summary:	
Team Leader KPIs	
1. First Contact Resolution (FCR)	2. Customer Satisfaction (C-SAT) Scores
3. Average Handling Time (AHT)	4. Hold Time
5. Call Quality Scores	6. People Development
7. Continuous Improvement	8. Fun and Team Engagement

Team Leader KPIs in Contact Center

As team leaders work so closely with frontline agents, and often even pick up some calls themselves, it can be a bit of a challenge to decide exactly what KPIs they should be measured against to positively assess their performance.

That's why we asked some contact center managers and trainers what they thought the most important team leader KPIs were and why. Here's what they said...

Always Scale Up the Frontline Metrics to Help Shape Team Leader KPIs

It's vital that any key performance indicators for team leaders are aligned with their team's KPIs. If they are being pulled in different directions, the team and general performance will be all over the place, as Mark McGill, Operations Manager at SSE Retail at Ovo Energy comments:

"KPIs are always extremely tough for management, particularly as a lot of contact centers expect their team leaders to form their own outlook on what their frontline teams are measured against."

"However, I find it is always best to have limited KPIs in place that offer the best opportunity for growth and service – without creating confusion."

A good way to address this is by making sure, first and foremost, that any frontline metrics are scaled up into a collective view as part of the team leader's objectives – for a bigger picture view that managers can compare across teams and departments.

Team Leader KPI Examples

Here are some of the KPIs that scale up well for a good indication of how the team leader and overall team is performing:

1. First Contact Resolution (FCR)

First Contact Resolution (FCR) – also known as Right First Time (RFT) – is a high-level quality metric for assessing a team's performance, and by default how well a team leader is managing and enabling their team to deliver. This can help management to better understand where there might be shortfalls too.

How Do I Measure It? Please see Job Sheet-09

2. Customer Satisfaction (C-SAT) Scores

When striving to deliver an exceptional customer experience, scaling up C-SAT scores to reflect an overall team's performance can help to give a clear indication of where teams are getting it right, and where a team leader might need some more support in enhancing their team's performance.

How Do I Measure It? Please see Job Sheet-01

3. Average Handling Time (AHT)

Short or long Average Handling Times across a team – particularly when compared against the contact center's overall average – can be a good indicator that something isn't quite right, and can help to highlight the need for further training and support, both for the team leader and the struggling agent(s).

How Do I Measure It? Please see Job Sheet-12

4. Hold Time

Hold time is another KPI that can be looked at collectively across the agents the team leader manages and can highlight where there may be confidence issues or knowledge gaps that the team leader needs to address (or may need further management support to help correct).

Metrics Need to Be Complemented by KPIs Around Coaching, People Skills, and Development

It's equally important that team leaders are assessed on how well they are managing their team's personalities and personal development. Everything from how engaged their team members are, to how positive they feel about their career opportunities, to how their coaching and development could be improved.

It's important to remember that the overall goal here is find the right mix of KPIs that don't just enable contact center management teams to measure call performance, but that also empower team leaders to be the best that they can be, as Kristian Websdale, Delivery Training Professional comments:

"Whilst KPIs are typically in place to measure call handling performance and efficiency, choosing KPIs for team leaders is also about creating a positive atmosphere for teams to thrive in. By targeting team leaders on the way they manage their teams, they can also be encouraged to have more personal conversations with their team to support development and engagement."

Other Key Performance Indicators for Team Leaders

Here are some other KPIs and objectives that can help support and monitor the overall performance of a team leader:

1. Call Quality Scores

Team leaders will spend a significant amount of time each week on quality monitoring and coaching and will have a good understanding of how their individual team members are performing.

However, a scaled-up view of a team's quality scores is also a good indicator of how well a team leader is coaching and managing their team – particularly when compared month on month, as well as across other teams and departments.

This can help to highlight any problem areas to upper management, as well as allow for best practice to be shared, and support and training offered to team leaders (as needs be) to help improve the overall performance of their agents.

How Do I Measure It?

This one will vary from contact center to contact center, but (as mentioned above) should be viewed collectively to reflect how well the team leader is doing. You could try making use of a traffic light system – whereby a team leader needs to (ideally) have all agents performing in green, but at the bare minimum X performing in amber or red, to meet their targets.

People Development

It's critical that team leaders have a vested interest in the long-term development and career progression of the agents that they manage, and so measuring them on people development too can help to make sure this doesn't get overlooked on a busy floor.

Exactly how you track this will vary from contact center to contact center depending on the progression schemes and opportunities you have in place, but where you have a progression scheme in place for frontline agents, team leaders can be assessed on how far their agents have progressed and what they are doing to support them.

How Do I Measure It?

Consider attaching a points-based system to your progression scheme, so it's easier to have sight of how people are progressing and in turn how this reflects on their team leader.

Team leaders can be assessed on how far their agents have progressed and what they are doing to support them. For example, 2 points for completing an online learning module, 1 point for reviewing and/or creating a career path planner, and so on. You could then target team leaders on making sure each of their team members achieves a minimum of 2 points per quarter.

Continuous Improvement

Whilst this one is harder to measure in figures, it's a good one to have in place to encourage team leaders to always be thinking up new ways to improve their team's performance.

How Do I Measure It?

One way to do this is to introduce a comments box for continuous improvement ideas as part of their 1-to-1s or appraisals, which can encourage team leaders to look for common themes in their quality scoring and areas that can be collectively worked on. This approach can also support team leaders in recognizing where something is a one-off or an indication of an underlying problem with an individual – such as personal issues at home.

Fun and Team Engagement

Again, this one is harder to measure in figures, but a monthly conversation with a team leader about any creative ways they are engaging with their teams can help to capture how well they are helping to drive a culture of fun and engagement. This could include producing a monthly newsletter email for their team, celebrating performance and “most improved”, organizing team lunches, bringing in sweets and treats, having a team “bake off”.

How Do I Measure It?

This could be added into a team leader's 1-to-1 or appraisal with a simple Y/N question of “actively driving team engagement” and a supporting text box for jotting down some of the activities from the month. You could also agree criteria (similar to essay-marking criteria) to give a team leader a score of 1-5 for their efforts.

Score Team Leaders on What Their Agents Have to Say About Them

Just like we encourage agents to have positive conversations with customers, team leaders need to be leading by example and having positive conversations with their agents. This encompasses support, development and engagement – and another significant indication of performance in this area comes down to what agents have to say about their team leaders.

The success of this approach and how well the team leader is doing can be measured by sending out surveys to agents to get their feedback. Agents can answer questions on everything from how well they feel their team leader supports them in their coaching and performance, to how empowered their team leader makes them feel.

Team leaders need to be leading by example and having positive conversations with their agents. Managers can then use these ratings and any additional comments provided to help shape their performance conversations with team leaders to help them be the best that they can be.

How Do I Measure It?

For this one, you need to run a dedicated survey – or add to the questions asked on any staff surveys that are already routinely circulated. Team leaders can then be scored based on the percentage of team members who tick ‘yes’ to questions on whether they feel their team leader is actively driving team engagement, supporting them in their career progression, and so on.

Final Thoughts

There is a lot of choice when it comes to picking team leader KPIs. However, a balance between scaled-up frontline metrics and a view of how well a team leader engages with their agents on a human level can create a well-rounded picture of a team leader's performance.

Best practice also leans towards a "less is more" approach, offering opportunity for growth and delivering great customer service – without creating confusion or conflicting interests. It's also vital that choosing KPIs isn't a one-off exercise and is regularly reviewed in line with business needs and priorities.

Too often there is a fear factor around KPIs; that contact center managers don't dare to touch them and instead have a tendency to do things the way they've always been done.

It's so important that KPIs are flexible and are regularly reviewed by senior management across the year, and with input from team leaders too – to make sure they are driving the right behaviors and monitoring what really matters."



Self-Check Quiz – 1.3.3

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: which KPIs are important to team leaders?

Question-2: How to measure People Development?

Question-3: How to measure Continuous Improvement?

Question-4: How to measure Fun and Team Engagement?



Answer Key – 1.3.3

Answer-1:

Contact Center Team Leader KPI:	
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	Call Quality Scores
Customer Satisfaction (C-SAT) Scores	People Development
Average Handling Time (AHT)	Continuous Improvement
Hold Time	Fun and Team Engagement

Answer-2:

Team leaders can be assessed on how far their agents have progressed and what they are doing to support them. For example, 2 points for completing an online learning module, 1 point for reviewing and/or creating a career path planner, and so on.

Answer-3:

One way to do this is to introduce a comments box for continuous improvement ideas as part of their 1-to-1s or appraisals, which can encourage team leaders to look for common themes in their quality scoring and areas that can be collectively worked on.

Answer-4:

This could be added into a team leader's 1-to-1 or appraisal with a simple Y/N question of "actively driving team engagement" and a supporting text box for jotting down some of the activities from the month.

You could also agree criteria (similar to essay-marking criteria) to give a team leader a score of 1-5 for their efforts.



Information Sheet – 1.3.4

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Identify key steps needed for develop of great team leadership and where a good team leader focuses most of their time in helping to run a contact center.

TEAM LEADERSHIP IN CONTACT CENTER: How to Develop

Content Summary:

People + Process = Performance

- 1- Follow 3P (People, Process, and Performance) Operational Framework Approach:
- 2-Team Leaders should divide their time equally between 3P
- 3-Treat Each Member of the Team as an Equal
- 4-Create a Team Feedback Loop
- 5-Be Prepared to Have Difficult Conversations
- 6-Get to Know Your Agents Personally

The 7 Step Procedure to train the Team Leaders Well

- Step One: Create a Team Leader Development Strategy.
- Step Two: Explain the challenges that come with being a Team Leader.
- Step Three: Teach a structured approach to overcoming these challenges.
- Step Four: Clarify how Team Leaders to spend their time.
- Step Five: How to manage a team of self-sufficient agents.
- Step Six: Explain the value and how to deliver of constructive feedback.
- Step Seven: Offer a continued program of support to your Team Leaders.

A key role of the team leader is boosting agent happiness. It is the duty of the team leader to lead professional development processes for agents, support them during calls, maintain their motivation level and their connection to the contact center etc.

A manager who fails to notice this and doesn't invest time in the development of these team leader skills will be unable to create a positive culture in their contact center. This will damage the quality of service that is given to customers, while it may also create problems in terms of attrition and absenteeism.

Therefore, contact center operation managers must recognize the importance of the team leader and invest time in the development of their personal skills, to help spread a good culture.

So, let's take a look at what 6 factors (Message) should be passed down to team leaders, so they can best influence agent performance and happiness.

1- Follow 3P (People, Process, and Performance) Operational Framework Approach:

A Powerful Formula to Increase Success

People + Process = Performance

For any business to perform at its highest level and achieve maximum profitability there must be an ongoing commitment to invest in developing both its people and efficient processes. Know No Bounds and Paragon Resources structure their solutions with the guiding principle of People + Process = Performance™. As financial professionals, your focus is often ROI; ours is ROP - Return on PEOPLE and PROCESS.

First and foremost, whether a corporate leader or individual agent, one must understand the gaps and responsibilities required in order to find the right **PEOPLE** to fill those specific roles. Teams are

comprised of INDIVIDUALS who are all driven and motivated by different elements and are gifted with varying talents. Ensuring that the right people are engaged in the right roles and have the right developmental opportunities and environments is essential in *maximizing talent and retaining your most important resource*.

PROCESS is the second key ingredient to success. In today's more complex world, with increased rules, regulations, and administrative requirements, time has become a most precious commodity. Systematizing one's business is essential. Individual advisory teams and firms need to have simple and executable processes in place in order to maximize their time and resources.

Performance Insights Process A powerful and unique suite of diagnostic tools, Performance Insights Process:

- Identifies the potential performance barriers that are hindering the ultimate success of an advisory team
- Facilitates key decisions that need to be made for the future growth of the practice
- Provides a roadmap for specific action

Professional agents know how important it is to conduct a thorough assessment of a client's situation before making recommendations. They also know the benefits of asking the right questions. In many cases, the assessment itself can be "worth the price of admission" since it helps clients realize where the gaps are in their current financial plan. For this same reason, we utilize assessments when building and developing a high-performance practice.

2-Team Leaders should divide their time equally between 3P

Ask your Team Leaders to think about these three words:

People

If someone has a preference for people, they will be concerned with helping others and would hate to be seen as cold or unfeeling.

They will empathize and be considerate but can become totally immersed in people issues, leaving the other parts of the triangle (performance and process) neglected.

Process

Those with a preference for process need to get things right. They are focused on correctness, order, **and** logic and have a strong sense of fairness and personal integrity.

However, they would rather be right than popular! If they are too task focused, they can be seen as unemotional, detailed and cautious.

Performance

If someone has a preference for performance they will be focused on achieving results, have a strong sense of urgency and be assertive.

However, others can see them as competitive, controlling, and blunt. They might be so focused on getting things done that the people and process elements can be overlooked. They will go out of their way to minimize risk and conduct lengthy analysis if needed – even if the task and people elements are suffering.

Effective Team Leaders needs to focus on people, performance, and process activities in equal measure. If your Team Leaders are too focused on their natural preference, ask them what they could be neglecting to help them find a positive, day-to-day balance.

3-Treat Each Member of the Team as an Equal

You are bound to have more personal chemistry with some of the agents than others. But there is no room for favoritism.

It is very important to ask yourself: Am I providing each agent with all of the tools that I can provide them with?

Am I choosing to give certain individuals less or more of my time and effort than others?

This is an ethical approach and, by following this, Agent Satisfaction – which is being deemed an increasingly important contact center metric – can be kept stable.

4-Create a Team Feedback Loop

After every interaction with an agent, make sure that you respond with feedback. Whether this is praising or correcting feedback, both are useful for the agent to fulfil their duties. Feedback loops are essential for your success, so use feedback frequently and on a routine basis. This applies not only to scheduled quality/coaching sessions, but to ad hoc conversations also.

5-Be Prepared to Have Difficult Conversations

Avoidance and disregard of difficult conversations with an agent will quite possibly escalate into a severe issue, which demands an even more complex confrontation. Do not be shy of confrontations, prepare for them. Use these conversations for learning and drawing conclusions for how you could better handle such an issue in the future.

6-Get to Know Your Agents Personally

Think about these questions on an individual level:

- What are your agents like?
- What is important to them?
- What is their professional and personal background?

Use this knowledge in each agent's regular management and contact center involvement. Make use of an agent's hobbies in the contact center to strengthen their bond with their job.

For example, if the contact center wants to redesign its walls and you know of an agent who likes painting, why not ask them for a creative contribution?

Activities That Can Help Improve a Team Leader's Skill Set

Just giving team leaders messages, like the four above, may not be enough. Investing time into developing their skill sets is also important. Team Leaders has the power to make or break the morale of their team, yet they are rarely given the training and support they need to do a great job. But before that we try to identify some common reasons why Team Leaders underperforms.

Here are six common reasons why Team Leaders underperforms:

1-They are sandwiched between upper management and their team – A Team Leader's role is one of the hardest jobs in any organization, as they are sandwiched between management and their team. On the one hand, they follow policies and do paperwork for the managers; on the other hand, they try hard to get most KPIs from their team.

2-They end up playing "first line support" – Instead of spending their time on the floor coaching agents, Team Leaders can end up becoming "first line support" – wasting their days fixing IT issues, acting as a substitute for a knowledge base, and reminding agents of important updates.

3-They spend too much time answering emails – Some Team Leaders believe that their core job is to answer emails from upper management. This can distract them from spending proper time on the contact center floor.

4-They are promoted too soon – High staff turnover rates can result in agents being promoted into a Team Leader role for no other reason than to fill a vacancy. They are usually then left to "get on with the job" with little training and support.

5-They are neglected in terms of formal management – In many cases the Team Leaders are the most neglected in terms of formal management development and also are the ones who often hold the key to unlocking the performance of the agents on the phones.

6-They are more concerned with being friends with their team – In many cases Team Leaders wanting to be friends rather than leaders.

What can we do about this?

Here are activities that will be useful to help assess team leader performance and help them to progress their skills. The 7 Step Procedure to train the Team Leaders Well.

The 7 Step Procedure to train the Team Leaders Well

Step One: Create a Team Leader Development Strategy

What do you want to provide as training for your Team Leaders? This will depend on what you want them to be capable of doing. You need to clarify what being a Team Leader means in your organization in order to understand personal development needs.

That's a broad spectrum these days. The two ends of the spectrum are:

1. Being part of a command control structure focused on maintaining conformance in a KPI-driven performance culture
2. Acting as an agent coach and customer journey improvement facilitator in service cultures that have joined the dots between customer and employee engagement.

Most service organizations are wriggling free of the former and edging their way towards a customer-experience-centered approach.

Create a Team Leader Development Strategy

Once you have established a firm idea of what being a Team Leader means in your organization, you should create a Team Leader Development Strategy. This will act as a reference point to ensure consistency across the contact center. Here are 14 key items that should be on your Team Leader Development Strategy:

1. Understanding the brand's customer experience ambitions and the contact center's responsibilities
2. In-depth insight into what matters to customers in all major customer journeys that the contact center supports
3. Understanding security, compliance and fiduciary responsibilities
4. Knowing how the organization measures success and their role in that achievement
5. Practical understanding of what motivates people to perform
6. The value and habit of personal development goals
7. Developing interpersonal communication skills
8. The art and techniques of coaching
9. Knowing how to develop a team and its role in supporting individual service excellence
10. How to establish and support a self-managing performance culture
11. Managing team and individual performance
12. How to support under-performance
13. How to develop a 'voice of the team' and ensure it is heard and acted on
14. A day/week/month in the life of a coaching-orientated Team Leader

Step Two: Explain the challenges that come with being a Team Leader

Team leadership is a tricky business

Teams can be an odd collective. Members come with personal skills and attributes, as well as specific individual needs and behavioral characteristics which don't always fit perfectly with the achievement of organizational goals. Blending task delivery with effective people leadership is a testing skill, even for the most accomplished and experienced Team Leader.

Newly promoted Team Leaders may find their role rather more challenging than they first thought. Team leadership requires dexterity and flexibility in communication as much as it does technical planning and execution.

Investment in their team will be both challenging and rewarding

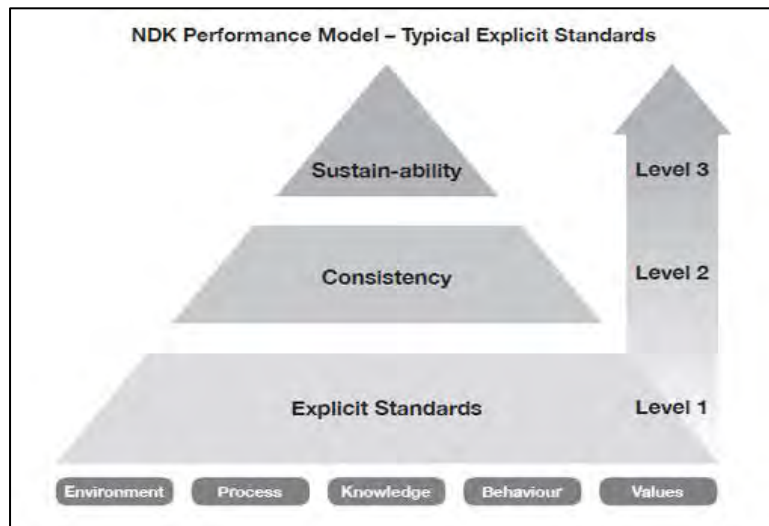
You need to explain to your Team Leaders that investment in people, in all its forms, will be the single most challenging (and potentially rewarding) activity they will face in their role. They must learn that team members can be catalysts at the heart of operations, driving the business forward with innovative thinking, commitment and skills.

But they should also be aware that these same team members can be challenging and volatile, as much as dedicated and reliable, caring and supportive, hard-working or lazy, focused or scatty, supportive or disruptive, detailed or big-picture aware, goal-driven, inspired and... just about everything else in between!

Step Three: Teach a structured approach to overcoming these challenges

Using the NDK Performance Model

The challenge is that, although people are not machines, they do have numerous 'settings' which can be affected by how the team is structured, managed and led. One way to help resolve this is to apply the NDK Performance Model. Here's the model:



Level 1 – Explicit standards

Outstanding contact center Team Leaders has an explicit set of performance standards spelling out exactly what is expected of team members. This approach applies irrespective of the industry sector or customer context. People need to know what is expected of them if they are to work to a given standard.

Explicit standards in teams usually come in 5 categories:

1. **Environment** – expectations regarding maintenance of physical surroundings within which a contact center agent operates, including how resources are to be used

2. **Process** – compliance with the procedures, practices and flow of activities required to achieve success
3. **Knowledge** – expectations regarding an agent's underpinning knowledge and understanding of a product or service
4. **Behavior** – expectations of personal communication, verbal and non-verbal, which contribute to effective outcomes for the customer, for the individual team player and for the whole team
5. **Values** – where a set of organizational and contact center team values, or cultural expectations, are in place.

Level 2 – Consistency

Top-performing contact center Team Leaders strive for consistency of excellence across the team, not just in key individuals. Effective training can help with this, especially when it is competence based and aligned with the explicit standards prescribed by the business and honed by the team leader.

But here's the rub: **consistency is of limited value if it's temporary.**

World-class Team Leaders know that performance excellence must be delivered day in and day out, long after the latest training initiative has been launched. In some organizations, training is like throwing wet mud against the wall: most of the mud slides off the wall immediately.

Level 3 – Sustainability

In fact, contact center agent training is a complete waste of energy and resources unless it is made sustainable. Key to sustainability is the development of a coaching philosophy and leadership behaviors that allow Team Leaders to keep the plates spinning long after an agent's training event has passed.

Sustainability through individual and team coaching keeps the momentum up and turns the training into habitual behaviors!

Step Four: Clarify how Team Leaders to spend their time

You should also explain how you expect your Team Leaders to manage their different tasks to help ensure that every aspect of the role receives equal attention across the week.

To help them find a positive, day-to-day balance.

Team Leaders should put their personal preferences aside

Team Leaders needs to be aware of whether or not members of their team are rewarded for meeting their own personal preferences and focus.

This misunderstanding can be at the root of the perception of a 'difficult performer', since we all like people who are similar to ourselves – life is just easier that way. Where people are led by a manager of a different preference, there must be a level of flexibility on the manager's part to meet the needs of the individual.

Failure to value people in the way they like to be appreciated can lead to higher levels of staff turnover. Often managers fall into the trap of recruiting a team of 'clones', which can mean everyone gets along well, but serious 'gaps' in the skills matrix occur.

Invest time in developing self-awareness

Investing time in developing self-awareness and wider skills in non-preferred areas for Team Leaders and their team may stop the continuous cycle of recruiting and replacing people (or sorting out squabbles). Team Leaders should ask themselves "*How might my team's performance be different if I changed my focus?*"

Step Five: How to manage a team of self-sufficient agents

All Team Leaders should be taught the skills they need to develop and manage a self-sufficient team of agents.

This approach will help them to make the most of their working day, instead of being sucked into “babysitting” and fixing minor issues.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Team Leaders should not indulge agents in their silly quibbles

Many Team Leaders spend their days feeling like a glorified babysitter, ticking very little off their strategic to-do list.

A good Team Leader will command such respect that agents wouldn't dream of taking the same silly little quibbles and gripes to them over and over. They wouldn't allow that.

...Instead, they should ask questions to help agents resolve their own problems

A good way to encourage this positive relationship is for Team Leaders to ask questions and make agents recognize that they had the answer within themselves or knew where to go to get it. This should hopefully mean that they think twice before approaching their Team Leader with lazy questions again.



If a Team Leader is being nice and helpful, it sends out the message that it is ok for agents to bring issues and squabbles to them – when really, they should be capable of resolving it amongst themselves.

Team Leaders needs to stop bending over backwards for their team

Some Team Leaders, often in their eagerness to please their own manager, take some of the mantras of leadership (such as being genuinely interested, listening and approachable) too far and allow their team to steal precious time and take advantage if they are that way inclined.

Being the best Team Leader isn't about bending over backwards every minute of the day. They'll soon feel like they are being pulled in a million different directions. People will take advantage of them and their boss will be disappointed when they don't get through the other work they need to do.

Here are some solutions:

- **Be firm but fair with everyone**

They don't need to show power or control. In fact, they want to think about how every action they do demonstrates that they put the organisation and the team before themselves, but not at the expense of getting the job done.

- **Be open and honest**

If the answer to a request or idea is no, then a good Team Leader will explain why.

If they have to do some digging to get to the real *why* then they should do it. Their team will still like to know that they tried for them and they'll appreciate knowing some facts and figures.

- **Show respect for themselves and everyone else**

A Team Leader's values and how they behave are watched by everyone around them.

If they abuse themselves by not getting enough sleep, being unhealthy or by being negative, then this is really demoralizing for their team.

Why would they want to aspire to follow in their Team Leader's footsteps? They'll think *“Being a manager in this place is clearly not worth it”*, and may even feel sorry for them. Carrying that sympathy is only taking an agent's energy away from the customers that they need to serve on the phones.

So once they have their own head and heart in order, Team Leaders need to think about their ability to raise the performance of their team.

A great Team Leader can unlock 20% extra discretionary effort in their team

According to research, everyone has about 20% extra discretionary effort within them.

Whether a team chooses to give it or not on a daily basis depends a lot on what the Team Leader does.

Step Six: Explain the value and how to deliver of constructive feedback.

Team Leaders should understand the value of constructive feedback and be trained to give it in a way that is both fair and motivating.

Positive feedback should be specific, public, and genuine

Effective Team Leaders give feedback – both positive and adjusting – so that agents know the standards required. Positive feedback should be **specific, public and genuine**.

Everyone likes to feel they are doing a good job, so Team Leaders shouldn't hold back – praise is the easiest and most cost-effective solution to an immediate feel-good factor for agents.

Team Leaders should praise a member of their team every day

Team Leaders should look for something to praise a member of their team for every day and rotate the team member receiving the praise fairly. They may have to go looking for things to praise, but it is a good habit to get into. Asking internal customers for feedback, earwigging into conversations, and asking for ideas, opinions or volunteers all create opportunities for praise.

A lack of corrective feedback could lead to widespread disgruntlement

Team Leaders also needs to understand that corrective feedback is just as important as giving praise when it comes to inspiring and motivating a team of agents. If a Team Leader fails to address a team member who cruises below average, star performers will pick up the slack, but slowly and surely, they become (quite rightly) disgruntled at having to do so.

Other team members start to think *“if they can get away with it, so will I”* and a culture permeates where it is okay to have longer lunches, arrive a little later, leave a little earlier, spend hours on social networking websites and make long personal phone calls.

All of these erode productivity, as well as the team, department and organizational performance.

Avoiding difficult conversations could see smaller problems escalate

If Team Leaders dislike giving criticism, they should try to think of it as adjusting feedback – and also consider the consequences for their team's performance if they don't have those difficult conversations.

For example, the team member has drifted slightly off course and the Team Leader needs to adjust them back on track.

Giving this feedback immediately will mean they have not deviated too far from the norm. Wait a while, and the Team Leader will have a much bigger problem on their hands.

Step Seven: Offer a continued programme of support to your Team Leaders

Training Team Leaders isn't a *“sheep-dipping”* exercise that can be done once a year. For the best outcomes for everyone involved, you need to offer a continuing program of structure and support.

Ensure you have a clear measurement for success

Just like any other training that you might carry out, you have to ensure a method to check how effective the training has been. This can sometimes be challenging as you are unlikely to be able to measure success through tests and role plays. For example, how would you measure that an individual has developed their empathy?

In these situations, consider observational feedback or 360 feedback from peers.

Talk to your Team Leaders and their line managers to uncover real skills gaps

It is common for Team Leaders to enter a training session and ask “*So why am I here?*” – so you also need to ask the question “*Who wants and needs the training?*”

Start by carrying out a training needs analysis – and ask the delegates which skills they want to develop. They can choose from a pre-set list if you want. This should be followed up by their line manager completing the same analysis and answering the question based on their observations of the Team Leader.

You then compare the responses to determine which areas you then specifically invest your time and money in.

Offer a variety of training options

You need to deliver your training agenda in an imaginative way – with a mix of learning approaches of which classroom learning is just one.

Whether this is a structured buddy system, e-learning or flipped learning (focusing on active learning strategies), it's important to understand that what works for one person may not work for another.

Allow time for soft skills to be practised and properly embedded

One of the biggest issues facing Team Leader training is that soft skills are not developed overnight. They take time to embed and require practice and a culture that allows delegates to make mistakes and learn from them.

In an ideal world, you would want to develop and implement these skills before individuals take on the role of Team Leader. A well-designed and well-supported soft skills program is often the key that lets managers become true leaders.

–Higher up” management teams need to lead by example

Expectations of Team Leaders in regard to the training agenda and style of leadership need to be actively supported and demonstrated by whoever manages them.

Team Leaders needs positive role models too!



Self-Check Quiz – 1.3.4

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: What 6 Messages should be passed down to team leaders, so they can best influence agent performance and happiness?

Question-2: Mention the six common reasons why Team Leaders underperforms?

Question-3: What are the 7 Step Procedures to train the Team Leaders Well?

Question-4: What are the 5 categories of explicit standards in teams under NDK Performance Model?



Answer Key – 1.3.4

Answer-1:

1. Follow 3P (People, Process, and Performance) Operational Framework Approach:
2. Team Leaders should divide their time equally between 3P
3. Treat Each Member of the Team as an Equal
4. Create a Team Feedback Loop
5. Be Prepared to Have Difficult Conversations
6. Get to Know Your Agents Personally

Answer-2:

1. They are sandwiched between upper management and their team
2. They end up playing “first line support”
3. They spend too much time answering emails
4. They are promoted too soon
5. They are neglected in terms of formal management
6. They are more concerned with being friends with their team

Answer-3:

The 7 Step Procedures to train the Team Leaders Well:

Step One: Create a Team Leader Development Strategy.

Step Two: Explain the challenges that come with being a Team Leader.

Step Three: Teach a structured approach to overcoming these challenges.

Step Four: Clarify how Team Leaders to spend their time.

Step Five: How to manage a team of self-sufficient agents.

Step Six: Explain the value and how to deliver of constructive feedback.

Step Seven: Offer a continued program of support to your Team Leaders.

Answer-4:

Explicit standards in teams usually come in 5 categories:

1. **Environment** – expectations regarding maintenance of physical surroundings within which a contact center agent operates, including how resources are to be used
2. **Process** – compliance with the procedures, practices and flow of activities required to achieve success
3. **Knowledge** – expectations regarding an agent’s underpinning knowledge and understanding of a product or service
4. **Behavior** – expectations of personal communication, verbal and non-verbal, which contribute to effective outcomes for the customer, for the individual team player and for the whole team
5. **Values** – where a set of organizational and contact center team values, or cultural expectations, are in place.



Review of Competency Final Checklist

For the performance criteria of the module **Demonstrate Knowledge on Advanced Customer Service** is given below:

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 1.1

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
1.1.1	Elements of advanced customer services are explained.		
1.1.2	Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) in customer services is defined.		
1.1.3	Target Customers and customers' needs are interpreted.		
1.1.4	Customer satisfaction metrics in contact center service is defined.		
1.1.5	The opportunities to increase customer expectations are identified.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 1.2

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
1.2.1	Contact Center components are described.		
1.2.2	Organizational structure is illustrated.		
1.2.3	Contact Center setup requirements are identified.		
1.2.4	Contact Center Process Blueprint is expressed.		
1.2.5	Service levels of a Contact Center is explained.		
1.2.6	Contact Center matrices/KPIs are described.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 1.3

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
1.3.1	Traits of a leader are interpreted.		
1.3.2	Role and responsibilities of team leader are described.		
1.3.3	3-P operational framework is interpreted.		
1.3.4	Procedures to develop capacity of a team leader are explained.		

Now, I feel ready to undertake my formal competency assessment.

Signed:

Date:

Module 2: Lead and Manage Team for Contact Center



Module 2: Lead and Manage Team for Contact Center



Module Content

Module Descriptor: This unit covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to lead and manage team for contact center. It specifically includes determining number of agents for a contact center, developing team for contact center, applying robust coordination and communication system, managing stress and conflict, and retaining the talent.

Nominal Duration: 80 Hours



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this module, trainee/student must be able to:

- 2.1 Determine number of agents for a contact center
- 2.2 Develop team for contact center
- 2.3 Apply robust coordination and communication system
- 2.4 Manage stress and conflict
- 2.5 Retain the talent



PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1. Contact center demand is forecasted using 4 Prediction Model.
2. Average Handling Time (AHT) is measured.
3. Occupancy & Shrinkage in the contact center is calculated.
4. Service Level standard is determined.
5. Call Abandon Curve is plotted.
6. Number of staff is calculated using Erlang Calculator.
7. Staffs are mapped to best shift pattern.
8. Major time allocation pitfalls are explained.
9. Five (5) Stages of Tuckman Ladder for team development is demonstrated.
10. Agents are selected as per service requirement.
11. Role of team members is identified.
12. Responsibilities of team members are assigned through internal meeting.
13. Steps for building trustworthy team are applied.
14. Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)/ Responsible, Accountable, Consult, inform (RACI) chart are described.
15. Elements of team charter are identified and described.
16. Cross-functional team communication techniques are interpreted.
17. Techniques to handle stress in the Contact Center is explained.
18. Customer interaction is monitored and sentiment is analyzed.
19. Causes of ambiguity and conflicts are identified.
20. Five (5) type of Thomas-Kilmann conflict management style are analyzed.
21. Steps of conflict redressing techniques are determined and applied.
22. Seven (7) Strategies are identified to increase staff motivation.
23. Absenteeism is calculated and managed.
24. Attrition rate is calculated and reduced.
25. Scheduled adherence is calculated and improved.
26. Three (3) keys to engaging employees are applied for motivating team members.
27. Team members are rewarded and inspired with incentive.
28. Games to liven up the team are performed.



Learning Outcome 2.1 - Determine number of agents for a contact center



Contents:

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: Comprehensive introduction to Contact Center

CONTACT CENTER FORECASTING: The Latest Techniques

CONTACT CENTER STAFFING: The Erlang equations

CONTACT CENTER SCHEDULING: Shift Pattern and Staff Bidding

CONTACT CENTER INTRADAY MANAGEMENT: Real-time Monitoring

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: The Most Common Contact Center WFM Metrics

HOW TO WORK OUT: How Many Agents You Need



Assessment Criteria:

1. Contact center demand is forecasted using 4 Prediction Model.
2. Average Handling Time (AHT) is measured.
3. Occupancy & Shrinkage in the contact center is calculated.
4. Service Level standard is determined.
5. Call Abandon Curve is plotted.
6. Number of staff is calculated using ERLANG-C Calculator.
7. Staffs are mapped to best shift pattern.
8. Major time allocation pitfalls are explained.



Resources Required:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

Workplace (actual or simulated).

Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.

Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activities – 2.1

Learning Activities	Resources/Special instructions/References
2.1 Determine number of agents for a contact center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet: 2.1.1 to 2.1.8 • Self-Check quiz: 2.1.1 to 2.1.8 • Answer key: 2.1.1 to 2.1.8



Information Sheet 2.1.1

Learning Objectives: You will be able to describe a good overview of the workforce management (WFM) in contact center.

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: Comprehensive introduction to Contact Center

Content Summary:

Why does WFM matter?

3 Key Benefits of Workforce Management in a Contact Center

1. Agent Satisfaction
2. Consistent Customer Service
3. Cost Savings

How does WFM work?

- Forecasting
- Staffing Calculation
- Scheduling
- Real-Time Management
- Agent Engagement
- Reporting & Analysis

What impact does WFM have?

Introduction

To operate a successful contact center, organizations need to be mindful of the numbers. The most important numbers – by far – are those of the staff in place to handle incoming customer contacts. And that's where workforce management (WFM) for contact centers comes in. **In the simplest terms, WFM is a set of processes designed to achieve and maintain operational efficiency by ensuring that the right number of agents, in the right places at the right times, doing the right things.**

The goal of workforce management (WFM) is to optimize the deployment of the most valuable - and costly - resource in every contact center: **the employees.**

Why does WFM matter?

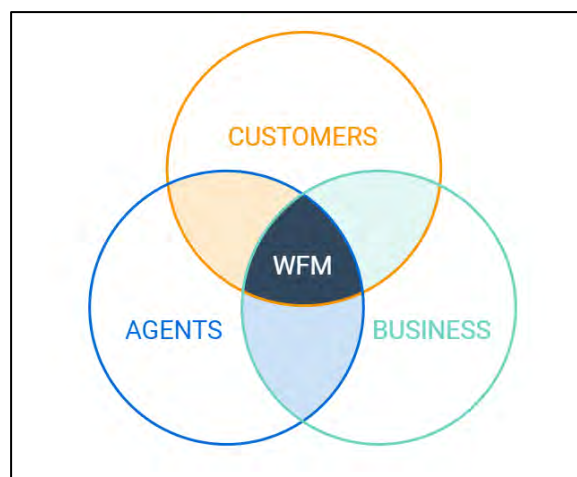
In contact centers, three opposing forces are in play:

1. CUSTOMERS

2. AGENTS

3. BUSINESS

- Exclusively focusing on the customer by always having plenty of agents to handle the contact volume is great for company reputation and may result in revenue growth, but could render the business unprofitable.
- Putting the agent first may make the company a great place to work, but if the customer experience is terrible and staffing costs are excessive, your contact center may be a place where nobody works in the long run.
- Well-run businesses are always looking for ways to optimize costs, but reducing staffing levels without regard to the customer experience or agent burnout is equally unsustainable.



WFM matters because it enables contact centers to optimize the balance between the three forces, simultaneously improving outcomes for the customer, the employees (or agents), and the business. If that sounds too good to be true, read on to learn how WFM performs this seemingly impossible balancing act.

3 Key Benefits of Workforce Management in a Contact Center

Let's check out how managing and optimizing your workforce can lead to a significant performance boost.

1. Agent Satisfaction

Only when agents remain happy and relaxed can they effectively empathize with the customers and deliver a great service experience.

But irregular agent schedules and excessive workloads may quickly lead to burnouts. Additionally, if the agents don't have a medium to share their grievances with the senior management, they may lose the intent to give their best.

That's surely not a recipe for happy customers. Moreover, it may cause a spike in agent turnover rate.

How can WFM help with agent engagement?

An efficient call center or contact center workforce management system prioritizes agent wellbeing. It empowers them by taking a thoughtful approach to work distribution and performance management.

For example, it focuses on ongoing training and constructive feedback. It gives the agents a solid foundation to improve their skills and boosts their morale.

Contact centers may further boost agent satisfaction by adding employee engagement routines to their WFM program. These may include:

- Open communication channels with higher management.
- Gamification to boost performance through healthy competition.
- Informal outings to ease work pressure and improve team bonding.
- Reward and recognition programs to keep the workforce motivated.

These WFM efforts will surely help you build a happy and productive workforce, ultimately translating to satisfied customers.

2. Consistent Customer Service

Customers expect fast and effective service every time they reach out to your agents. Long wait times may impact the service level and affect your brand image through negative feedback on social media.

Efficient forecasting and employee scheduling help you maintain adequate staffing levels at any given time. With a robust workforce management system, your customers get a faster response and a satisfactory one, thanks to highly skilled agents.

3. Cost Savings

A poorly managed workforce can significantly increase your operating costs. Quite often, you may over-allocate agents and resources during low customer interaction volume.

This inefficient management of resources can add up over time and impact your **profit** margins. WFM strategies help you make informed decisions on resource and agent allocation.

Here are some ways it can help reduce costs:

- Regulate unplanned overtime requests.
- Prevents time theft by accurately logging work hours.
- Reduces administrative costs associated with attendance and leave management.

You will be surprised how WFM can help you operate at lower costs and still deliver impeccable customer experiences.

How does WFM work?

WFM is a repeating process and that's why it is often characterized as a cycle:

- **Forecasting**
- **Staffing Calculation**
- **Scheduling**
- **Real-Time Management**
- **Agent Engagement**
- **Reporting & Analysis**



- **Forecasting:-** It starts with forecasting, which accurately predicts future contact metrics such as volume and average handling time (AHT) using historical data and business intelligence that you add, such as upcoming marketing campaigns. For Details: **Read Information Sheet 2.1.2 CONTACT CENTER FORECASTING: The Latest Techniques.**
- **Staffing Calculation:-** The next step is staffing calculation, which determines the number of employees you will need to handle the forecast contacts to the desired service level. For Details: **Read Information Sheet 2.1.3 CONTACT CENTER STAFFING: The Erlang Equations.**
- **Scheduling:-** Scheduling is about creating shifts for employees which match supply and demand for staff as closely as possible, as often as possible. You must take into account skills, labor laws, employment contracts and other constraints. **Read Information Sheet 2.1.4 CONTACT CENTER SCHEDULING: Shift Pattern and Staff Bidding.**
- **Real-time management:-** is about identifying where reality has deviated from plan, for example, an unexpected volume spike or unusually high sickness levels. It enables you to take swift and effective corrective action to defend your KPIs. **Read Information Sheet 2.1.5 CONTACT CENTER INTRADAY Management: Real-time Monitoring.**
- **Agent engagement:-** Agent engagement is about letting your employees interact with the planning process and feel more in control. **Read Information Sheet 2.5.2 HOW TO MOTIVATE A TEAM: Strategies-Engagement-Gamification.**
- **Reporting & Analysis:-** Finally, reporting and analysis give you insights that will help you to constantly improve. For example, you can measure your shrinkage, which will feed into your staffing calculations next time round the cycle. **Read Information Sheet 3.4.1 CONTACT CENTER ANALYTICS: Reporting & Analyzing.**

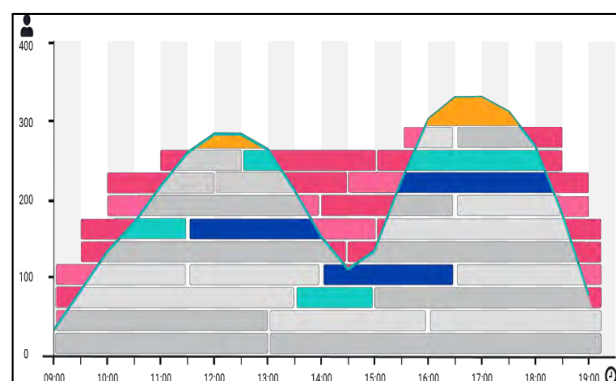
What impact does WFM have?

Here is what “the right number of people in the right places at the right times, doing the right things” looks like:

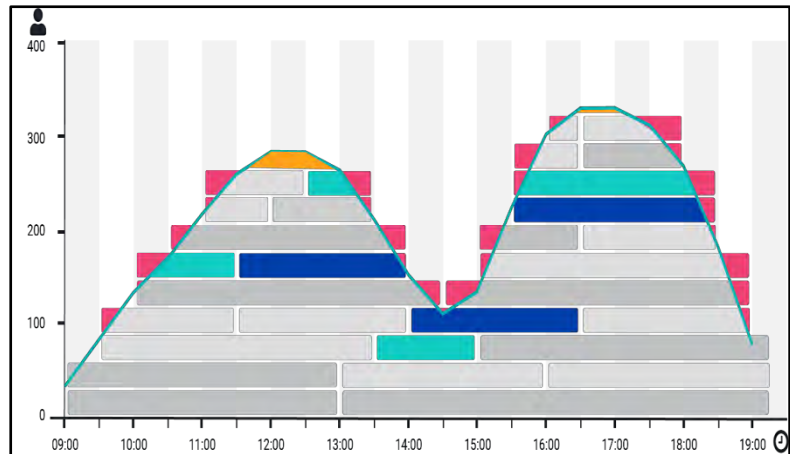
Without WFM:

With WFM:

In both charts, the green line shows the demand-driven requirement for a single activity for a single day. That's the number of agents required in each time interval to handle the volume of contacts (e.g. calls, chat messages, emails, etc.) in that interval. The horizontal bars show the shifts assigned to staff across the day.



In the first chart, it's clear that we rarely have the right number of agents in the right places at the right times. There are periods in the morning and afternoon, highlighted in orange, when insufficient agents are scheduled. At those times, the customer experience suffers, the service level goal isn't met and the employees get stressed. At other times, highlighted in red, there are too many agents on duty. This is a waste of the contact center's budget.



The second chart shows what WFM does: supply and demand are much more closely aligned.

Impact:

- **Satisfied customers**
- **Happier employees**
- **Optimized business bottom line**

Getting WFM right is not a trivial task. Read on the following **Information Sheets** to walk through the WFM cycle step by step, starting with Forecasting.

WFM Cycle	• Forecasting	: Information Sheet 2.1.2
	• Staffing Calculation	: Information Sheet 2.1.3
	• Scheduling	: Information Sheet 2.1.4
	• Real-Time Management	: Information Sheet 2.1.5
	• Agent Engagement	: Information Sheet 2.5.2
	• Reporting & Analysis	: Information Sheet 3.4.1



Information Sheet – 2.1.2

Learning Objectives: To identify the latest techniques of contact center forecasting.

CONTACT CENTER FORECASTING: The Latest Techniques

Content Summary:

What is Forecasting?

Why do we forecast? Why does forecasting matter?

How does forecasting work?

Step 1-Collect and analyses historical data

Step 2-Predict future volume and AHT

Step 3-Apply business intelligence

Four Contact Center Prediction Models:

Triple Exponential Smoothing (or Holt Winters)

ARIMA (Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average)

Neural Networks

Multiple Temporal Aggregation

Choose Software as your Workforce Management System

How does forecasting work in a WFM system?

What impact does forecasting have?

Introduction

Any good planning process must include some degree of foresight. Understanding, anticipating, and preparing for things to come is essential when it comes to creating an effective plan of action.

Contact center forecasting uses mathematics to calculate future workload for all relevant channels, e.g. calls, chat, email and social media, based on history. WFM is about having **the right number of people in the right places at the right times, doing the right things** and forecasting is the first step in the process of determining the right number of people.

What is Forecasting?

Forecasting is all about predicting the future as accurately as possible given all the information available; this includes information about what's happened before (historical data) and knowledge of any future events that might impact a forecast (special events or seasonality).

In the contact center, this means knowing (or getting as close as possible to knowing) what to expect in terms of **call volume, average handle time (AHT) and more**. This kind of foresight allows organizations to staff, schedule and better prepare to face seasonal and everyday changes, and it's achieved through highly accurate forecasting.

Contact center forecasting is the act of predicting or estimating future volume coming into the contact center via calls, email, chat, or whatever other channels a contact center may rely on.

Why do we forecast?

Forecasts serve an important purpose: ensuring you achieve your goals with effective planning.

GOALS are what you would like to have happen. While these should be linked to forecasts and plans, they aren't always structured that way. Too often, goals are set without any plans for how to achieve them and no forecasts to determine whether they are realistic.

PLANNING is a response to forecasts and goals. Planning involves determining the appropriate actions that are required to make your forecasts match your goals. Okay, but how does this relate to contact center forecasting, workforce management (WFM) and workforce planning. Let us dive into deep:

Why does forecasting matter?

Forecasting is the foundation stone of workforce management. Without forecasting, it isn't possible to balance the supply of staff with demand from customers, because the demand is unknown. If demand is unknown, it's impossible to schedule the workforce efficiently.

The purpose of contact center forecasting is to optimize productivity and ensure the agency has the appropriate number of agents to handle the contact volume. When done right, forecasting helps contact centers avoid losing money due to having too many agents on staff or on schedule at the same time. It also helps increase customer satisfaction by ensuring that the contact center never has too few agents to handle the volume of calls or emails coming in.

There are many applications for contact center forecasting. The technique can be used to recruit, create agent schedules, or improve KPIs like average response time or average wait time. Accurate forecasting leads to happier customers and agents since employees are less likely to feel overburdened or undervalued.

How does forecasting work?

Forecasting can be broken down into 3 steps:

Step 1-Collect and analyse historical data

Step 2-Predict future volume and AHT

Step 3-Apply business intelligence

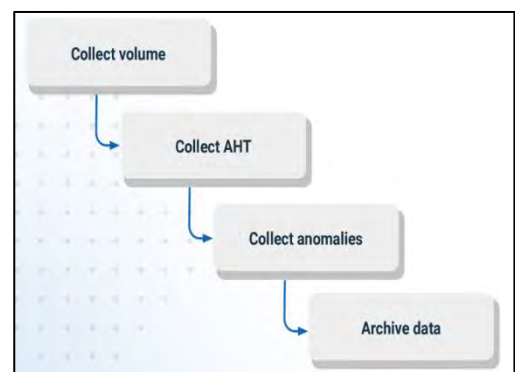
Step 1: Collect and analyse historical data

The main input to the forecasting process is the number of contacts such as calls that arrived (or were offered) per interval (e.g. every 15, 30 or 60 minutes). Ideally, average handling time (AHT) will be subject to the same analysis. That's because the number of staff needed to handle the workload is a function of both volume and AHT, and AHT typically varies over time. In many contact centers, handling times are longer in the evening than during the day, for example.

Long-term and short-term forecasting are both important. The more history that is available, the better you can detect seasonal patterns and special events in the data. It is important to collect data in short intervals like 15 minutes. That's because the goal is to match supply and demand across each working day, observing the peaks and troughs and avoid under- and over- staffing. That isn't possible if you only consider the total volume per day.

Typically, the data comes from your contact routing system, e.g., the automatic call distributor (ACD) that routes incoming calls to agents. You are dealing with huge volumes of data, so an automated integration with the ACD will save a lot of time and reduce the scope for errors.

Good forecasting practice includes analyzing the data to find anomalies such as gaps in history and one-off spikes in



volume. These don't belong in the forecast and must be removed. You should however keep a note of exceptions that you know will recur in future, such as billing runs, advertising campaigns, and public holidays. We'll come back to that in step 3, below.

Step 2: Predict future volume and AHT

Once you have a clean set of historical data, you are ready to generate your forecast down to interval level.

Contact centers benefit from a rich amount of historical data and should be able to deliver good forecasts. Workload projections guide workforce forecasting, and uses historical trends, performance, or seasonal data to predict personnel needs. To forecast accurately, team leaders need to adopt an effective technique.

The Main Four Contact Center Prediction Models:

- **Triple Exponential Smoothing (or Holt Winters)**
- **ARIMA (Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average)**
- **Neural Networks**
- **Multiple Temporal Aggregation**

1. Triple Exponential Smoothing

Triple Exponential Smoothing (also known as the Holt Winters technique) is a simple forecasting technique and one that is surprisingly robust as a forecasting method. It has been in use since the 1960s and is widely used in contact center forecasting – it makes up the backbone of most workforce management (WFM) forecasting systems.



The term **triple** means that the forecast data is split into 3 forecast components

– **Level, Trend and Seasonality** – to “isolate” each component from each other. If we take the example of a monthly forecast then the three components are

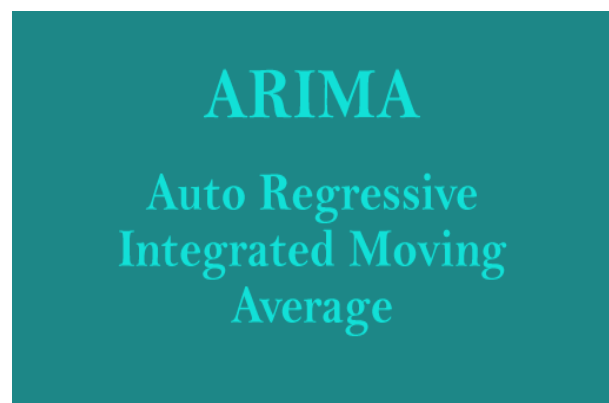
- **Level** – Last month's forecast
- **Trend** – The expected increase or decrease in contacts from last month
- **Seasonal** – The impact of the seasons on the data (so, for example, March could be 120% of the average month in the year and August could be 85% of the average month – as many people are on holiday in August and are less likely to call the contact center).

The term **exponential smoothing** applies to the way that data is smoothed (or averaged) from one period to the next. While Triple Exponential Forecasting can be viewed as a robust **“general-purpose”** forecast model, it is better suited to long-term forecasts than to shorter-term forecasts:

2. ARIMA (Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average)

One more advanced (and more complex) forecasting method that has been more popular over the past 10 years is **ARIMA**.

ARIMA is an acronym that stands for **Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average**. It is used with time series data to either understand data better or to predict future points in the series. It's comprised of three main components: the ability to compare data to past patterns (auto-



regression), to compare or differentiate current observation to previous (integrated), and to smooth out data over several past periods (moving average).

ARIMA has three main components with example:

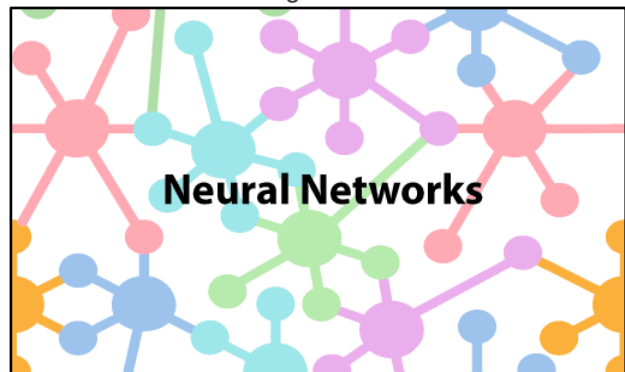
- **Auto Regression** – the ability to compare data with past patterns (e.g. a time lag from 12 months or 52 weeks ago)
- **Integrated** – the ability to compare or difference the current observation from the previous observation
- **Moving Average** – the ability to smooth out data over a number of past periods.

ARIMA leverages historical data to present data sets based on past inputs. Data from past periods smooth out existing inputs and make forecasts more accurate.

3. Neural Networks

Neural networks have been getting a lot of press recently, particularly since Google has started using them for artificial intelligence – in speech recognition and in their search algorithms. Neural networks can also be used in contact center forecasting.

Leading organizations have adopted neural networks for artificial intelligence in areas such as search algorithms and speech analytics. This forecasting model tries to model the brain by observing a series of inputs and then attempting to adjust a “hidden network” until it discovers a matching output. In a call center, a neural network will examine a series of calls and attempt to match the next field of data to the forecast.



Neural networks are flexible as they can accommodate external inputs such as special days, website views, and marketing activity. Also, this forecasting model does not require complex algorithms as it learns and improves from existing data, automatically isolate specific days from a forecast, and model different factors.

It looks like neural networks could have a lot of potential advantages for contact center forecasting

- They do not need complex algorithms programmed into them as they learn from the data supplied
- They can take in external inputs – such as special days, marketing activity, website page views of the temperature to model different factors.

Some of the most exciting factors for neural networks could be in automatically isolating special days from the forecasts.

4. Multiple Temporal Aggregation (MTA)

The very latest thinking in contact center forecasting is Multiple Temporal Aggregation.

This forecasting method combines high-frequency data — hourly and daily inputs — with trends that span an extended period. An example of MTA in practice will be comparing the number of contacts acquired in 2021 with 2020 and getting an 8% increase. The result, which is the trend, averages out the contacts and special events, such as seasonality over the year. MTA allows teams to focus on intraday and longer-term data in generating forecasts.



By aggregating the series, you see it from different viewpoints. You will never be able to extract from a single viewpoint everything, but if you pull together all of the aggregation from different aggregation levels, then you have a holistic view.

The advantage with Multiple Temporal Aggregation is that you can focus both on the intraday and the longer-term data at the same time. Contact center teams can gain a wide scope view of staffing needs by looking at annual, daily, or hourly data all at once.

Which Forecasting techniques will prevail in the Long Term?

For a group of people who spend their time forecasting the future, the question of which forecasting method will prevail seems a bit like asking the “how long is a piece of string” question. Certainly, both neural networks and MTA look like they can deliver promising results. But it may not be an “either-or” situation.

Combinations of neural networks and other methods are possible. For example, we may see a neural network filter in front of a Multiple Temporal Aggregation model, or we may also see neural networks working in combination with Exponential Smoothing.

“I think that the contact center industry is lagging behind in the adoption of more complex forecasting methods,” says Mostofa Jaman, From Genex Infosys.

“However, I don’t think the question is accuracy. If you look four or five years into the future, I think that there will be a shift in general from forecast accuracy to decision making. “The shift will be to better integration of forecasting into the decision-making process, that is, not only selecting forecasts based on accuracy, but on the quality of decisions they support, such as staff scheduling and training of new agents.”

Step 3: Apply business intelligence

Human intelligence is at least as important as artificial intelligence when it comes to forecast accuracy. No contact center experiences the same volume and pattern of calls 365 days a year, and frequently the planner will be aware of upcoming events that didn’t occur in the past. You must deal with:

- Marketing campaigns and promotions
- Operational changes (e.g. billing, logistics, sales)
- Organizational crises (e.g. bad PR, competitive pressure)
- Corporate strategy and tactics (e.g. market development and expansion, new product launches, price changes, changes in customer base)
- Public holidays, some of which don’t happen on fixed dates
- Natural events (e.g. weather)

The impact of these exceptions must be factored into the forecast. This will be a manual process if you are using a spreadsheet, but if you are using a WFM application there should be a forecast calendar feature. Some of these drivers will have been revealed during the analysis in step 1. The rest need constant vigilance and good collaboration with colleagues in departments such as marketing.

Choose Software as your Workforce Management System

The ability to use performance data in workforce forecasting is crucial. Manual prediction and scheduling is time-consuming, laborious, and error-prone, and does not offer the flexibility to make real time adjustments to meet demand. While historical volume can predict future demand, integrating performance and productivity into the calculation can make a big difference.

Contact center forecasting is a task of great responsibility and importance. Incorrect staff scheduling has a deep impact on customer satisfaction levels. There are several forecasting formulas and tools available, but neither of them can give you the accuracy and simplicity of a workforce management (WFM) solution. WFM solutions make forecasting an easy and quick process for managers and supervisors, allowing them to assign shifts for each team member and optimize their workforce. Using

such a solution, contact centers turn unexpected workload peaks to be less frequent and agents more productive and effective. A WFM solution automates staffing with business variables like vacations, availability, workload, and planned absences, gathering historical data to predict workforce demands.

You could use Excel spreadsheets to manually compile and analyze the data (who doesn't love a good spreadsheet?), but there's an easier solution: automation. With a WFM system you can improve forecasting accuracy, and free up time for important tasks like overseeing contact center or call center operations.

For the simpler algorithms, it's possible to do forecasting with a spreadsheet. The more powerful algorithms require a professional WFM application. So many WFM solution provider (**NICE, Community WFM, Dial pad, injixo & Inoria, for example**), deploys multiple algorithms and uses artificial intelligence to constantly select and configure the algorithm that gives the best results with your data.

[We will explore the details of WFM Software, in the **Information sheet 4.4.2 Contact Center Technology: Best Return on Investment (ROI)**]

How does forecasting work in a WFM system

Workload Forecasting	Staffing Forecasting	Shrinkage Forecasting
<p>Predicting the number of incoming interactions (Volume) in comparison with the average time it takes an agent to handle an interaction (AHT).</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing historical data to identify patterns • Considering anomalous events that might impact future work distribution patterns not represented in the historical, time-series data. Things like, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Marketing events o Company holidays o Weather events 	<p>Determining the number of agents needed on the floor to handle interactions, considering the forecasted volume and AHT.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying customer quality of service goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Service levels o Average speed of answer o Max. abandon rate goals • Applying agent utilization in the form of occupancy thresholds • Providing the staffing needs per work channel that drive the scheduling process. 	<p>Understanding the percentages of foreseeable (or unforeseeable) times an agent may not be able to take an interaction.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying the expected agent non-adherence rates • Applying planned shrinkage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Breaks and meals o Planned time off o Optimized meetings or training • Applying unplanned shrinkage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sick leave o Ad-hoc coaching o Last minute PTO

What impact does forecasting have?

Forecasting opens the door to the rest of the WFM process. It's only when the forecast is in place that you can calculate the number of heads needed in each time interval and schedule your agents accordingly. Without forecasting, scheduling is reduced to simple rostering, without regard to the underlying demand.

No forecast is ever completely accurate and that's why the workforce management process includes real-time management. Without a good forecast, ideally, one that is updated continuously as new data becomes available, the job of real-time management is considerably harder. Instead of taking infrequent, considered corrective actions, planners are constantly fire-fighting.



Information Sheet – 2.1.3

Learning Objectives: To determine number of agents for a contact center.

CONTACT CENTER STAFFING: The Erlang Equations

Content Summary:

What is staffing calculation? Why does staffing calculation matter?

Which techniques used to calculate staffing needs?

The ABC of Erlang

How Are Contact Centers Now Using Erlangs?

- Forecast contact volumes
- Occupancy
- Average Handling Time (AHT)
- Shrinkage
- Service level
- Average patience

How does staffing calculation work?

What impact does staffing calculation have?

What is staffing calculation?

Staffing calculation is the process of determining the number of staff needed to handle a forecast workload to a given grade of service. For example, when provided with a forecast volume and average handling time of sales calls for next month in 15-minute intervals, workforce planners need to calculate the number of agents required in each 15-minute interval to answer 80% of calls within 20 seconds.

Why does staffing calculation matter?

The result of the staffing calculation is the staffing requirement at interval level. This is the input to the scheduling process and without it, schedule optimization isn't possible. Effective real-time management is difficult if you can't compare actual staffing with required staffing. Staffing calculation is also used as part of the long-term capacity planning process, informing the contact center's training and hiring programs, along with growth plans and estimated attrition rates.

Which techniques used to calculate staffing needs?

Some contact centers rely on workforce management (WFM) software to create accurate forecasting predictions, while others may use **Erlang equations** or spreadsheets to calculate staffing needs.

Erlangs are used as inputs into three key equations, which are known as the **Erlang A, Erlang B and Erlang C formulas**.

These equations can all be utilized by contact centers to great effect, the most useful being the **Erlang C** in enabling you to **calculate how many staff you need in a contact center**.

The ABC of Erlang

Three Erlang formulas were devised in the first half of the 20th century: **Erlang A, Erlang B and Erlang C**.

However, these formulas were not created in that order, with Erlang B being the first to be invented by a Danish mathematician named AK Erlang. In 1917, AK Erlang followed this up by creating the Erlang C formula, before another mathematician, named Conny Palm, then invented the Erlang A formula in 1946. While the Erlang B formula isn't really used within contact center today, both Erlang C and Erlang A still have a huge part to play in contact center workforce management (WFM).

Why Do Erlangs Matter?

In the past, Erlangs were most used as part of the **Erlang B equation**.

The Erlang B equation enables you to work out how many telephone lines you need coming into a building to support a given contact volume of calls. More to the point, the Erlang B equation would enable you to calculate how many lines you would need to allow for queuing.

By using the Erlang B equation alongside forecast call volumes and Average Handle Time (AHT), we can also predict how quickly on average the queue would move. This final Erlang B calculation still matters for contact centers, while calculating the number of telephone lines is becoming less important in today's digital world.

Now, most contact centers are using Erlangs for staffing calculations and predicting their abandon rate, making it a very valuable contact center measure, as explained in more detail below.

The Erlang B Formula

Originally, the Erlang B formula was designed to work out the probability of blocking within a phone system. So, when contact centers were first introduced, Erlang B was used to calculate how many lines you required in a contact center to allow for queuing. Therefore, inputs into Erlang B when applied to the contact center would include forecast call volumes and Average Handle Time (AHT) to calculate how quickly the queue would move on average. That number would influence the number of phone lines you'd need.

The Erlang C Formula

The Erlang C formula, built upon the Erlang B formula, is used in the contact center to work out how many agents you need to staff the contact center to meet a given **service level**. This is a formula that's still very much used within the industry. The formula is encoded into devices known as **Erlang Calculators** – which make contact center staffing calculations easy. To do this, the Erlang Calculator converts several calls, AHT and service level into several staff required, while modern versions also take other metrics – such as **occupancy, shrinkage, and average patience – into consideration as well**.

However, to calculate average patience, you're also going to need a little help from Erlang A

The Erlang A Formula

The Erlang C formula, while it was very useful, didn't take into account the number of people who abandon their calls before they reach an agent. Fortunately, in 1946, Swedish mathematician Conny Palm devised an extension of the Erlang C formula, which is known as the Erlang A formula, which does take "Abandons" into account. In fact, the A in Erlang A stands for Abandons. In creating the Erlang, A formula, Palm used a simple, manageable way to measure abandons that combines the mathematics of both AK Erlang and Andrey Markov.

How are Contact Centers Now Using Erlangs?

While we have earlier focused on the Erlang B formula, the modern contact center will likely concentrate much more on the **Erlang C and Erlang A formulas**.

While Erlang A is good at estimating the number of abandoned calls based on average patience, it has a tendency to underestimate the number of staff that are needed.

For example, if 50 people were to call in and the Erlang A predicts that 10 will abandon – if you just use the Erlang A formula, you will only staff for 40 people. However, there will be some days when fewer or more than 10 people abandon, as natural variation is a given. So, if it's a day where it's fewer than 10 people, you will likely be understaffed.

When you are understaffed, you're unlikely to ever recover as you are always running behind schedule. If you instead plan to always be a little bit ahead of the curve, you then have the ability to catch up. Because of this, it's important not to use the Erlang A formula alone in working out how many people you need to staff the contact center at any one time based on a service level.

So, by combining Erlang C and Erlang A, you can receive the most accurate prediction for how many staff are needed, in accordance with your:

- Forecast contact volumes
- Occupancy
- Average Handling Time (AHT)
- Shrinkage
- Service level
- Average patience

Erlang Calculations-Example

To showcase how both the Erlang A and the Erlang C formula can work together, here is an example of how **our Erlang Calculator** produces its staffing calculations.

With the estimated number of agents needed being based on Erlang C and the abandon rate being based on Erlang A, we will enter the following information into the Erlang Calculator.

- Forecast contact volumes – 100 contacts
- In a time period of – 30 mins
- Average Handling Time (AHT) – 157 seconds
- Service level – 80% of calls answered in 20 seconds
- Occupancy – 85%
- Shrinkage – 30%
- Average patience – 90%

From these calculations, Erlang C is telling us that **we need 17 agents** in the contact center for this 30-minute period.

↓ ERLANG C				ERLANG A ↓		
Agents	Agents Before Shrinkage	Service Level	Occupancy	ASA (s)	% Answered Immediately	Abandon Rate
13	9	72.4%	85.4%	506	10.4%	13.66%
14.5	10	80.0%	85.7%	72.4	41.1%	9.07%
15.5	11	85.0%	85.8%	25.7	62.8%	5.71%
17	12	88.1%	85.9%	10.8	77.5%	3.41%
18.5	13	90.0%	86.0%	4.8	86.9%	1.92%
20	14	91.0%	86.0%	2.1	92.8%	1.03%
21.5	15	91.5%	86.1%	1	96.2%	0.52%

How does staffing calculation work for different contact channel?

1. Multiple channels

Modern contact centers handle customer interaction via multiple channels: phone, web chat, email, etc. There isn't a one-size-fits-all method of staffing calculation. The best-known method is Erlang. But Erlang is proven for inbound calls, but it's no use for web-chat, because it doesn't take into account the fact that agents can typically handle more than one chat at a time. It's no good for emails either, because emails don't hang up and the goal is typically to handle them in a timescale measured in hours not seconds.

There is a different calculation method for each contact channel:

- **Inbound calls:** Erlang. There is a family of Erlang methods, but Erlang C is most commonly used in contact centers. Erlang C takes into account the expected volume of calls, the expected average handling time and the desired service level (SL). Some WFM applications enable grade of service to be expressed as average speed of answer (ASA) or abandonment rate (ABR) as well as SL.
- **Web chats:** Staffing is calculated using a derivative of the Erlang C method but adapted to take into account concurrency and context-switching overhead.
- **Email, back office, social media:** A linear calculation is used, based on completing the number of contacts within a given time frame, taking into account the AHT.
- **Outbound calls:** Such calls are made at the discretion of the contact center, not the customer, and multiple approaches are possible. The simplest method is a constant requirement, based on the number of agents the planner wishes to schedule. A linear calculation based on the number of contacts in the campaign and the desired timescale can also be used. Some WFM applications provide a proprietary calculation that takes into account parameters such as right- and wrong-party connect rates.
- **Non-demand:** Sometimes, the planner needs to create a constant staffing requirement across opening hours, without an underlying forecast. This can happen when launching a completely new service, or for activities with such a low or volatile number of contacts that it is impractical to try to forecast, but the need for a certain number of agents is known. This is sometimes the case with social media, during the early stages of handling that channel.

2. Multiple skills

Agents with more than one skill will naturally spend less time waiting for a contact they are qualified to handle. The occupancy and utilization of multi-skilled agents will therefore tend to be higher than that of single-skilled agents. This in turn means that the greater the extent of multi-skilling, the fewer agents are required to handle the workload. This effect is known as pooling efficiency'. Modeling this pooling efficiency in the forecasting, staffing and scheduling process is complex and requires algorithms that are only available in powerful WFM applications such as inixio.

What impact does staffing calculation have?

WFM is all about matching the supply' of agents with demand' for agents. Staffing calculation tells us the exact demand, down to interval level. Armed with this information, the planner can tackle the next stage in the WFM cycle: **scheduling**.



Information Sheet 2.1.4

Learning Objectives: you will be able to learn: Automatic scheduling systems allow you to create and manage an effective schedule.

CONTACT CENTER SCHEDULING: Shift Pattern and Staff Bidding

Content Summary:

What is scheduling? Why does scheduling matter?

What Type of Shift Pattern Should You Operate?

Innovative Shift Patterns for Contact Centers

How to Get the Best from Your Shift Patterns

Shift-Planning Techniques

What is a Shift Bid? How Does Shift Bidding Work?

Pitfalls to Avoid

What impact does scheduling have?

Introduction

Contact center scheduling is a workforce management activity in which agent work schedules are created based on a variety of factors, mainly expected contact volume and agent availability and skillset. Good scheduling balances customer demands (volume) with efficient use of labor. It can be a complicated balancing act - schedule too few agents and your average speed of answer (ASA) might skyrocket; schedule too many agents and your labor costs will grow. It's a classic case of trying to satisfy both the customer and the CFO.

Scheduling is a dynamic process, so even the best schedules are likely to change after they get published. Agents call in sick, queues blow up, volume comes in much lower than forecast. Just another day in the life of a contact center. All of these events may require intraday scheduling changes to ensure you have agents in the best, most productive place at any given time, while not sitting idle.

What is scheduling?

WFM is about having the right number of people in the right places at the right times, doing the right things. **Scheduling is the part of the WFM cycle where agents are assigned to shifts and tasks so that workload fit is maximized.**

Why does scheduling matter?

In a perfect world, the supply of agents always matches the demand for agents. There would always be exactly the right number of people needed to service customers within the desired service level. Schedule efficiency, also known as workload fit, is a measure of the extent to which the supply of agents matches the demand for agents. The goal is perfect coverage, i.e. zero under-staffing and zero over-staffing at all times.

The unfortunate fact is that unless you schedule your agents properly, you'll be over- or under- staffed most of the time. Forecasting and staffing calculation are important, but if you don't schedule agents to match the calculated demand, all your effort so far was wasted.

What Type of Shift Pattern Should You Operate?

In most contact centers, patterns and routines lead to the best productivity and consistent attendance. These are some of the most popular. Well, as ever, it depends on your operation and the requirements you need to meet. Shift patterns often fall into one of the examples below:

- 1. Fixed shifts:** - Contractually agreed working patterns where hours of works, days worked, and time off are fixed and consistent. This may either be highly favored or highly disliked by agents, dependent on the fixed shift being worked, for example, **8am-4pm Monday – Friday**, or **2pm-10pm Tuesday -Saturday**. This pattern offers limited flexibility to the scheduler.
- 2. Flexible time:** A contact center manager's worst nightmare. Agents work core hours, for example between 10am and 3pm, but may work from 7am to 6pm and build up flexi-hours. The critical issue here is that under many flexi-time arrangements, the choice of when to accrue and take the flexi-time is with the agent not the operation, and this has been seen to cause many problems. Employees love it, but managers (and customers) don't because it doesn't always work out.
- 3. Rotations:-** this pattern is very common, A rota is a repeating pattern of shifts, typically used to rotate working hours so that each employee is asked to work an equal number of 'popular' and 'unpopular' shifts. For example, in a business which is open from 8am to 10pm, an employee may have a rota consisting of 8am to 4pm in week one, 11am to 7pm in week two and 2pm to 10pm in week three, repeating from week four onwards. fixed shifts, but employees rotate from one to the next. It's fairer, but your employees will tend to hate it as they can't build consistency into their personal lives.
- 4. Annualised Hours:** Typically, the annual hours are based on a core week, with hours multiplied up to an annual total, minus annual leave and public holidays. Popular in some contact center s, but notoriously difficult to operate, as shift patterns can be widely different. Popular with resource planners, it offers the most flexibility, but annualised hours can be very unpopular with staff, unless communication and goodwill is very strong.
- 5. Banked Hours:-** Like flexi-time, but the control is much more balanced between the operation and the agent. Time can be worked over and above the contractual commitment and can be "banked" and taken later.

Such a strategy not only enhances agent advocacy but it improves peak management, limits overtime costs, and lowers the cost of temporary resources. However, such an initiative should come with rules attached, as some agents may end up with lots of time accrued, which they could choose to take off during periods with traditionally high contact volumes.

There are several other shift types in use today, but most will consist of elements of the above, and be adapted for part time, flexibility, and demand requirements.

- 6. Part-Time Shifts:** Part-time shifts can give a great deal of flexibility in the schedule. They can also provide extra flexibility for key members of staff. Some of the most popular part-time shifts include:
 - Student shifts (typically evenings and weekends) so that the student can attend lectures
 - The part-time mother (typically working from 9.30 – 14.00) allowing a mother to work while the kids are at school.
 - The late riser.
- 7. Reserve Working:** Reserve workers are a pool of agents not looking for regular work, but who are happy to come in during busy periods such as at Eid/Christmas or to provide holiday cover. Dependent upon circumstances, the hourly rate is often better than for part-time or permanent staff. This is a similar system to the way that most schools operate with supply teachers.
- 8. Homeworkers:** Homeworking is becoming an increasingly useful tool. There are lots of benefits to it and one of the key benefits it brings – just like NHS Direct have done – is to allow people to do a two- or three-hour shift from home. If agents don't have to travel to work, then you can design shorter shifts or fill particular gaps which you find hard to recruit for at a physical center.

Innovative Shift Patterns for Contact Centers

Many contact centers are shifting away from the traditional shift patterns to improve customer service and increase productivity. Now, they are implementing several innovative shift patterns to better meet forecasted demand and employee preferences. **Here are five excellent examples.**

1. Split Shift:

A split shift divides the workday into two or more sections. The gap in between is longer than an hour-long lunch break, allowing employees more time to enjoy hobbies, complete tasks like picking up their children from school or simply relax.

Indeed, most operations experience a lull in contact volumes in the middle of the day. So, implementing split shifts with a three-hour break from 11am to 2pm is standard practice.

Planners must schedule split shifts in advance; a request for an extended break does not count. After all, WFM teams often implement split shifts to ensure most employees handle contacts during peak periods, which requires meticulous planning.

The pandemic fueled this growth in split shifts, as they are convenient for remote agents. However, it is often not the best shift pattern for in-office teams. Why? Because it is not ideal for most employees to travel to work twice a day.

2. Micro Shifts

Like split shifts, micro shifts are an excellent option for remote agents. These shifts can last as little as two hours or perhaps even 30 minutes and are ideal for contact centers that experience high contact volumes at particular points in the day.

These shifts are particularly beneficial for contact centers that hire college students, as they will likely have a couple of hours free in between lectures and seminars to log on.

Offering these shifts also helps gain more hours from the team. For example, some part-timers might enjoy doing one or two extra hours every week, as long as they can fit it around their schedule. Given the current cost of living crisis, many agents will welcome such opportunities while the contact center enjoys greater coverage.

3. Slant Shifts

Coined by leading WFM provider injixo, slant shifts offer agents the opportunity to work the conventional 40-hour week. However, hours are not split evenly between each day.

Instead, the working week compromises of ten hours of work on Monday, nine hours of work on Tuesday, eight hours on Wednesday, seven hours on Thursday, and five hours on Friday.

Such a shift pattern is ideal in operations where contact volumes drop as the week progresses. Also, many agents appreciate such a schedule as it allows them to enjoy a more relaxed end to the week.

4. Casual Shifts

Many contact centers have a base of casual workers on zero-hour contracts to whom they offer shifts when low on staff. With a WFM system, these agents may instead view the schedule and create their own schedules.

Enterprise labor services like Shiftsmart help businesses accrue such a workforce. Their solutions are ideal for many companies that suffer from continuous understaffing, supplying the casual workers to plug schedule gaps.

How to Get the Best from Your Shift Patterns

You won't get the luxury of working out the shift patterns from a blank sheet of paper, but what would you want to consider / include if you could? Do not sit in a room and design it – engage with the agents, operations and recruitment people in the business. Open a dialogue about what they need.

Draft and regularly review a set of principles to work to when designing a shift pattern. Get as much input as you can and see it as an ongoing process every six months.

Be flexible with your intra-day planning. All kinds of factors can change intra-day volumes, such as news events, competitor reaction, local incidents, etc. You need a process in place that allows for schedule changes to items such as: breaks and lunches, cancelling or rescheduling off-line activity or the offering of short-notice leave or overtime, as late in the planning cycle as possible.

Shift-Planning Techniques

What a Workforce Management Scheduler Can Do

Yet, most importantly, we need to start thinking of shift planning as a key engagement opportunity and adding in flexibility. This is because while these flexibility levers may not attract people to the job, unless it's homeworking of course, they will be invaluable in keeping them there.

Much of this comes down to the technology in the future and the problem-solving ability of our schedulers, assessing what we can do instead of reverting to the typical 40 hours a week, with agent working eight hours on each day.

Here are nine techniques for WFM Schedulers to follow, in the hope of improving WFM processes.

5. Identify Employee Strengths

Your contact center employees have a range of strengths. You likely have some high performers and some low performers. Some of your agents move through calls with shocking speed, while others are known for empathy and high customer satisfaction scores.

It is smart to identify these strengths. There are countless times when you will need to decide between two employees for one slot, and matching strengths to customer needs means first knowing what those strengths are.

How to Get the Best from Your Shift Patterns

You won't get the luxury of working out the shift patterns from a blank sheet of paper, but what would you want to consider / include if you could? Don't sit in a room and design it – engage with the agents, operations and recruitment people in the business. Open a dialogue about what they need.

Draft and regularly review a set of principles to work to when designing a shift pattern. Get as much input as you can and see it as an ongoing process every six months.

Be flexible with your intra-day planning. All kinds of factors can change intra-day volumes, such as news events, competitor reaction, local incidents, etc. You need a process in place that allows for schedule changes to items such as: breaks and lunches, cancelling or rescheduling off-line activity or the offering of short-notice leave or overtime, as late in the planning cycle as possible.

3-Optimized scheduling:

A scheduling method that aims to consistently minimize under- and over-staffing by matching the number of scheduled agents with the number of agents required, as closely as possible. This entails selecting the optimum start times, finish times and (optionally) break times, for all employees. Optimized scheduling maximizes schedule efficiency. It enables the consistent achievement of service level goals, while also minimizing employment costs and avoiding agent stress and burnout.

Scheduling is an art, as well as a science. Only optimized scheduling unlocks the full potential of WFM, but it is easier said than done.

Optimized scheduling: the challenge

Schedule optimization is not a trivial task. Let's look at some scenarios.

Scenario 1 (simplified)

- Scheduling 25 employees for 5 days
- 1 activity
- Possible starting times for employees: 8:00, 9:00 or 10:00
- With shifts of equal duration

That is 3^{25} or about 847 billion possible schedules. That's about 100 times the size of the Earth's entire population. Or twice the number of stars in the Milky Way galaxy.

Scenario 2 (enhanced flexibility)

- Scheduling 25 employees for 5 days
- 1 activity
- Possible starting times for employees: Between 8:00 and 10:00 in 15-minute intervals
- Employees can work 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 hours

That is 45^{25} possible schedules, i.e. a number with 41 digits. For comparison, the number of atoms in a typical human body has 27 digits.

Scenario 3 (realistic)

- Scheduling 100 employees for 5 days
- 10 different activities (including breaks)
- Starting times for employees are at 15-minute intervals between 8:00 and 16:00
- The length of shifts varies between 4 and 8 hours in 15-minute intervals
- Each employee can perform 5 different activities per day

That is $33,126,489^{100}$ possible schedules. That's an almost unimaginably large 'solution space' and finding the optimum is like finding a 'needle in a haystack'. But the challenge doesn't end there.

Agents must be scheduled for activities for which they have the necessary skills. Multi-skilled agents may be scheduled to perform different activities at different times; this is known as 'block scheduling'. Alternatively, agents may be scheduled on a blended basis, as described below

4- Multi-skill blended scheduling

As explained in multi-skill staffing calculation, employees with more than one skill will naturally spend less time waiting for work that they are qualified to handle. The greater the extent of multi-skilling, the fewer employees are required to handle the workload. This effect is known as 'pooling efficiency'. To unlock the pooling efficiency of multi-skilled agents in a contact center, three components are required:

1. A communications platform that routes contacts to agents in real-time according to specified rules. A typical automatic call distributor (ACD) is configured to route each incoming call to the available agent with the required skill who has been idle longest
2. Blended schedules, in which agents are scheduled to be present to handle any contact for which they have the necessary skills
3. A scheduling method that generates optimized schedules, taking into account all the constraints and the multi-skill pooling efficiency. This is extremely complex and requires algorithms that are only available in powerful WFM applications

5- Shift bidding

It is possible to allow agents to state their preferences or bid for shifts by breaking down the process of optimized scheduling into four steps:

1. Create schedules that are aligned with demand but are not yet assigned to agents.
2. Give agents the opportunity to state their preferences within the offered shifts, or bid for shifts
3. Allocate agents to shifts, respecting their bids as far as possible
4. Allocate the remaining shifts to agents, while respecting the constraints

The goal of shift bidding is to combine optimization with agent engagement. It does however have some downsides. It requires much more effort by the planner. Three-stage optimization typically results in slightly inferior workload fit to that which one-stage optimization achieves. Agents need to be educated about how the bidding process works, to avoid the perception of lack of fairness. For example, if 10 agents bid for an attractive shift of which 5 are available, how are the winners' and losers' selected? Realistically, shift bidding is not possible without professional WFM software.

Shift bidding: a popular method that reduces manual work and increases employee happiness.

One newer approach to contact center scheduling is called shift bidding. This system can be powerful, reducing manual work and increasing morale — as long as you implement it right and have the appropriate tools to do so.

Contact Center Shift Bidding

Contact Center shift bidding is a somewhat newer approach to implementing a contact center shift schedule, and it has much to offer to contact center leadership and workers alike. If you're wondering what shift bidding is for contact centers, here's what you need to know.

What is a Shift Bid?

A shift bid is an indication from an employee that the employee is interested in working a specific open shift. Within a shift bidding system, all employees can indicate their preferences for upcoming available shifts.

While not every employee will get their preference every single time, most employees get their ideal choice more often than without shift bids. And that leads to increased employee satisfaction, not to mention better attendance and lower no-shows.

How Does Shift Bidding Work?

A traditional **Contact Center** shift schedule is straightforward but exceptionally manual. Workers are assigned to specific shifts or slots. These can be a consistent schedule, such as weekday first shift, or they can be manually assigned according to factors such as contact Center shift patterns or anticipated fluctuations in call volume.

Shift bidding doesn't work that way. With shift bidding, your scheduling team determines how many of each position will be needed for the various shifts and slots covering the next period—but they don't assign those shifts to employees yet. Next, each employee indicates their preference for shifts during an upcoming period (this is the bid in shift bidding).

Next, contact Center software fills shifts with employees according to the rules you establish. These rules can be based on seniority, work performance, or whatever else you establish. If desired, leaders can manually fine-tune scheduling results before they're finalized.

Benefits of Shift Bidding

Shift bidding creates numerous benefits, both for your contact Center leadership and for your employees.

- **Increased autonomy:** employees love having some say in when they work.
- **Increased job satisfaction:** increased autonomy leads to higher levels of job satisfaction.

- **Less manual work:** Schedulers and contact Center leaders save tons of time because they no longer have to build schedules manually, deciding shift by shift who will work when and factoring in dozens of time off requests.
- **Fewer individual requests:** Letting people indicate their preferred work times allow them to deselect times that conflict with life events (doctor's appointments, childcare, etc.), lowering the number of individual schedule change requests that come in.

6- Breaks, lunches, and meetings

It is good practice to schedule breaks during the working day. Letting agents choose their own break times is empowering, but it does have potential drawbacks. If every agent went on break at the same time, service level and customer experience would be terrible.

Introducing optimized break and lunch times has a significant positive impact on workload fit, even in contact centers where agents are working on fixed rosters or simple rotas. By the same token, workload fit benefits from the optimized scheduling of meetings, training sessions, and 1:1s.

7- Combination

In a perfect world, every agent would be fully multi-skilled and be willing to work any shift assigned to them. In the real world, staff turnover means that universal multi-skilling can never be achieved. And it's rare to find a contact center with no agents working on legacy fixed-hours contracts. The good news is that even if just a subset of your employees can be optimized, there will be a disproportionate improvement in efficiency. Employing a 'mix and match' of fixed shifts, rotas and optimized scheduling is a smart and practical move.

8- What if' scenarios

Many systems also have a simulation facility so you can see what effect introducing a new shift pattern will have on productivity.

Using what-if scenarios to see how spikes/lulls, crises or outages could impact customer support and agent performance can help you prepare and forecast across channels.

This means that you can better predict how many contact center agents you will need to schedule in advance no matter what the scenario. With this information you can create alerts and trigger workflows based on KPI thresholds such as schedule adherence, shrinkage, and service level.

Efficient shift planning is critical to the success of any contact center. Don't make your managers/team leaders figure out how to optimize contact center scheduling alone.

By providing your contact center Team Leaders and managers with the insights and training they need, you can ensure they have the right call center agents working exactly when they're needed most.

9. Shift swaps

If an employee asks to change a shift, a scheduler can suggest a suitable replacement, or the system can allow employees to arrange their own swaps.

Shift-swapping is a stalwart initiative to safeguard agent satisfaction. However, shift-swap requests soak up far too much of the planning team's time – especially in large operations. As such, governance is necessary to restrict post-schedule publication requests for only the most critical reasons. For requests of lesser immediate importance, direct advisors to automated shift self-service tools.

Choose an app – compatible across iOS and Android devices – that offers agents complete visibility and more control over their schedules. It also allows agents to set preferences, bid for time off, and choose their breaks – alongside making shift-swap requests. All this removes email, increases efficiency and streamlines scheduling.

However, in terms of last-minute, in-person shift-swap requests, balance service levels with fairness. A 'computer says no' policy can damage agent relationships. Remember, agents are real people with real lives.

Scheduling Is Not as Simple as It May Seem at First Glance

The enlightened enterprise takes agent preferences and skill sets into account when scheduling. The "standard agent" approach to solving resource issues (i.e. treating one agent the same as any other) will cause problems with both agent satisfaction and customer service levels.

Most companies using advanced workforce management software will have between six and nine skill-sets to work with, although a few contact centers use as many as 50.

Yet the business's needs must come first, so a scheduler will have to find the best way to match the company's requirements with those of its employees.

This can get particularly complicated in a multimedia environment which usually has agents with multiple media handling skills (e.g. voice, email, text chat, etc.) and multiple business abilities (e.g. sales, service, product knowledge, languages, etc.).

Businesses must look for a solution which does not over-simplify the scheduling process, yet retains usability and the flexibility to make changes.

Solutions that allow agents to request and alter their own schedules (for example, around holidays) are becoming increasingly sought-after, as they have also been proven to strengthen agent morale.

Making sure that your scheduling suits both your staff and your business brings a number of benefits:

- Enhanced efficiency and lower costs through consistent and timely planning based on business needs
- Greater customer satisfaction as a result of improved service
- Automation of administration, freeing managers and planners to do what they do best
- Automatic monitoring

Why Choose Workforce Management for Contact Center Shifts?

Shift bidding can be a net win for your workforce and your management team, but by itself, it doesn't completely solve the problem of manually scheduling who works when. Shift bidding alone tells you who wants to work when, but a manager or shift leader must still make the call for who does work when. There's also the issue of setting contact center shift patterns to create a contact center shift schedule that meets the company's needs — something that can involve a lot of guesswork and plenty of errors if done manually. Contact Intradiem to learn more today.

Ensuring that staff schedules remain in line with business needs is vital to success, but juggling scheduling rules, contracts, shift patterns, flexible working hours and ever-changing requirements presents a huge challenge if you manage them manually.

Automatic scheduling systems allow you to create and manage an effective schedule by taking into account your business requirements, your employees' needs and your scheduling rules.

Schedule Pitfalls to Avoid

You need to be seen to be fair to everyone but also to have some flexibility when needed. There is something wrong with the management culture if you can't recognize and act upon individual issues or areas that are proving to be a problem. The seemingly obvious, but vital rules are as follows:

1. Don't put an early after a late
2. Don't put a certain shift down after time off
3. Give agents consecutive days off whenever you can.

Don't set the parameters for the shift patterns in the software solely to what the business needs. Make sure you have added the above rules as a minimum. Breaks need to be looked at and be realistic – not half an hour after the agent has arrived!

Constraints

To build a viable schedule, planners need to take into consideration all the relevant constraints, including:

- The working times specified in agents' employment contracts
- Labor laws, e.g. minimum time off between shifts, maximum working hours
- Agent availability or preferences - if this is part of your agent engagement strategy - see Employee Engagement

What impact does scheduling have?

Scheduling is where most of the magic of WFM happens: It's the part of the WFM cycle where agents are assigned to shifts and tasks so that the right number of people are in the right places at the right times, doing the right things. Scheduling is not a trivial task. The number of permutations and the complexity of the constraints mean that building optimized schedules is practically impossible without professional software. But without effective and efficient scheduling, the goals of WFM cannot be achieved.



Information Sheet 2.1.5

Learning Objectives: you will be able to learn real-time monitoring routines are essential for running an efficient and effective operation for contact center management.

CONTACT CENTER INTRADAY MANAGEMENT: Real-time Monitoring

Content Summary:

What is Intraday management or ‘real-time management’?

How does real-time management work?

Proactive versus reactive real-time management

A Routine Day in the Contact Center-The Three Improvements by Team Leaders

- I. Develop an “Unplanned Routine”
- II. Implement an Open-Door Routine
- III. Create a Control and Monitoring Routine

What impact does real-time management have?

What is intraday management or ‘real-time management’?

Intraday management, also known as real-time management, is a process of managing and optimizing the operations of a business in real-time to ensure that service level targets are met or exceeded. This process is used primarily in contact centers, help desks, and other customer service operations where incoming customer requests are handled by agents.

Intraday management involves monitoring and adjusting key performance indicators (KPIs) such as call volume, agent occupancy, and average handle time (AHT) throughout the day to ensure that service level targets are met. This can involve making real-time decisions about staffing levels, scheduling breaks, and reassigning agents to different tasks or queues to ensure that customer requests are handled in a timely manner.

Effective intraday management can help businesses improve customer satisfaction by reducing wait times and improving first call resolution rates. It can also help businesses optimize their staffing levels and reduce operating costs by ensuring that agents are utilized efficiently throughout the day.

Why does real-time management matter?

Contact center intraday management sometimes called ‘real-time management’, is the process of monitoring how actual performance compares on the day with planned performance, then taking swift corrective action. Real-time management is important for several reasons:

Meeting customer expectations: In today’s fast-paced world, customers expect quick and efficient service. Real-time management helps businesses meet customer expectations by ensuring that incoming customer requests are handled promptly and efficiently.

Maximizing agent productivity: Real-time management allows businesses to optimize their staffing levels and ensure that agents are utilized efficiently throughout the day. This can help businesses reduce their operating costs while still providing excellent customer service.

Improving operational efficiency: By monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) in real-time, businesses can quickly identify and address operational issues before they become major problems. This can help businesses improve their overall efficiency and reduce downtime.

Increasing revenue: Real-time management can help businesses increase their revenue by improving customer satisfaction and retention. Satisfied customers are more likely to become repeat customers and recommend the business to others.

Meeting service level targets: Real-time management is essential for meeting service level targets, such as answering a certain percentage of calls within a specific time frame. By monitoring KPIs in real-time and making adjustments as needed, businesses can ensure that they meet or exceed their service level targets.

In summary, real-time management is important because it helps businesses provide excellent customer service, increase efficiency, reduce operating costs, and ultimately, increase revenue.

Even if you have invested enormous effort in building accurate forecasts and efficient schedules, one thing is for sure: It won't go 100% according to plan when the day arrives. “No plan survives contact with the enemy” is a military axiom that could have been coined for contact center planning.

How does real-time management work?

Intraday managers are responsible for monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) on the day. They then take appropriate action when one or more KPIs deviate from the target by more than a threshold value. They are also typically responsible for managing shrinkage events such as time off and meetings in order to minimize the impact of these events on KPI achievement.

The following KPIs are typically monitored:

1. Forecast accuracy (i.e. by what amount actual volume and AHT deviate from the forecast)
2. Customer experience metrics (e.g. service level, average speed of answer, abandonment rate or response time)
3. Waiting time metrics (e.g. the number of calls in queue and measures of whether this is increasing or decreasing over time)
4. Coverage (i.e. by what amount the operation is under or over staffed compared to plan. Understaffing is typically the result of agent absence due to sickness or other shrinkage events)
5. Agent schedule adherence (i.e. the extent to which agents are complying with their schedules)

If KPIs are above target and more agents are present than are required to handle the workload, possible intraday corrective actions include:

- Offer to temporarily allocate under-utilized agents to other departments of the company and reschedule them as necessary
- Schedule training and development. On-demand e-learning is perfect for this
- Offer time off on short notice

If KPIs are below target and the service goals are not being met, possible intraday corrective actions include:

- Request backup staff from other departments of the company.
- Temporarily suspend cross-selling or up-selling to reduce AHT
- Reschedule training and other controllable shrinkage
- Ask team leaders and managers to log in as agents
- Extend existing shifts by offering overtime. Overtime has a bad reputation but is not necessarily a bad thing

Agent schedule adherence

Managing agent schedule adherence is a vital component of real-time management. If agents show up late, spend too long on breaks, perform the wrong activities at the wrong times, or go home early, all the other KPIs will suffer.

Adherence is just as important during periods of over-performance as it is during periods of under-performance. Agents who at first glance appear to be over-delivering can damage performance, too. Consider an agent who delayed their break to finish an important call. They went on break 15 minutes late and returned 15 minutes late. During that 15-minute period, as forecast, volume was high and because one agent was missing, the service level goal was missed. This effect is called the power of one. Of course, it's a bad idea for agents to cut short customer contacts to take a break at exactly the

correct time, but it is important that agents have a clear understanding of the consequences of their absence, even for a short period of time.

The good news is that, unlike the other challenges faced by the intraday management team, adherence can be controlled. It requires suitable tools, fed with data in real-time, but improving adherence is one of the most powerful tools in the real-time manager's toolkit.

Proactive versus reactive real-time management

Real-time management should not be confused with firefighting. It should not be characterized by panic or chaos. Well-managed contact centers have a planning culture, not a reactive culture, and this applies to real-time management as much as it applies to the other parts of the WFM cycle.

An effective real-time manager has a well-defined plan covering:

- The thresholds for KPIs, beyond which action is triggered
- A pre-agreed escalation plan
- The list of corrective actions that will be taken, in priority order
- How changes will be communicated to agents and managers
- Action that will be taken afterward, e.g. finding the root cause of the incident and implementing changes to prevent it from happening again

A Routine Day in the Contact Center

Contact center management routines are essential for running an efficient and effective operation. Yet, for most of you, a routine is a distant hope. When contact center managers get up for work every morning, they supposedly know what their day is going to look like. In practice, however, there are always surprises.

The statement **“a routine day in the contact center”** usually reflects a day on which everything happens, including unexpected events that you suddenly find out about through the customers. There are also situations which require reconsideration of decisions, constant risk management and so forth. In most contact centers, this is what routine looks like! If you love your job, it will likely be thanks to these characteristics – the pressure, the energy, and the need to always keep your finger on the pulse. Yet there will be moments when it feels too much.

The Three Improvements

Each of the following ideas is accompanied by a common sentence that you may have heard from your team, in order to emphasize the benefit of implementing each routine. Also, remember that a routine is a routine, so these ideas need to be implemented on a full-time basis in order for the contact center to realize the full benefits.

- I. Develop an **“Unplanned Routine”**
- II. Implement an Open-Door Routine
- III. Create a Control and Monitoring Routine

1. Develop an “Unplanned Routine”

“You cannot really manage a schedule with all of these unplanned occurrences.” Is that so?!

Yes, there are many unplanned events and situations that are impossible to prepare for. Some of these you have already experienced enough to foresee in advance, while others manage to surprise you time and again.

When this is the case, tasks are postponed from one day to the next and there is already a pile of those which you have forgotten about and that you need to deal with... sound familiar? So, how can you introduce a routine that will help prepare you for the unforeseen issues? The answer is to schedule times in your day, preferably around peak hours, to fire-fight, i.e. create an **“unplanned routine”**.

How Best to Implement an “Unplanned Routine”

Implementing an unplanned routine indicates that you recognize that your schedule must be flexible enough to be able to meet all of the management tasks. If you have not been working with an organized schedule up to now, it is definitely time to start. And, if you have been, but you still find it hard to meet all of the time-limited tasks, this is the routine for you.

An unplanned routine in the management of the contact center is a routine which includes fixed time-slots in the schedule during which you do not perform any predetermined tasks, but are free to cope with the ongoing events.

Remember, this is not time for emails, nor is it time for meetings. Instead, this is the regular time during which most of the problems usually arise, and you, without knowing what the issue is, are ready, free and available to provide a managerial response.

But in practice, how can you go about creating an unplanned routine?

Here are four steps that will help you do so.

- **Step 1** – Examine when the main peak hours during the day are. Once you know this, define the periods of time in your schedule for which you plan to fire-fight.
- **Step 2** – Manage your calendar such that these hours will be blocked and you cannot be invited to a meeting during those hours.
- **Step 3** – We recommend to also talk to your direct manager (i.e. your boss) and explain that these are times in which your presence in various meetings comes at the expense of the contact center’s operation, and therefore should be avoided as much as possible.
- **Step 4** – During the time-slots which you determined, go around the contact center – be on the floor! Things will reach you even before the fire breaks out! Give an immediate response, follow up on the team’s functioning and make sure that the managerial team reporting to you indeed meets all of its tasks.

In other words, make “the unplanned” a routine! In this way, you will slowly be able to reduce all these cases which suddenly arrive and require special, complex and lengthy treatment. By doing so, you will also make clear to the rest of the team when you are not available – meaning that you can go about your other tasks without the risk of distraction.

2. Implement an Open-Door Routine

“This is how it is, whoever shouts loudest gets attention first.” Is that so?!

We know that the natural tendency of managers at the contact centers is to seek the fire and act to extinguish it as soon as possible. This is part of the daily reality. However, there are situations in which the immediate response generates more harm than benefit.

By implementing an open-door policy in your contact center, you can proactively engage with the team and promote two-way communication, as everyone feels confident coming forward with their questions.

How Best to Implement an Open-Door Routine

An open-door routine is part of a management policy that allows the contact center team to transparently approach the management team and the contact center manager as they wish. This expression is uttered by many managers. However, in practice, when you are in between meetings and gatherings, briefings, and analyses – do you really have time and availability for the agents?

When you do talk to an agent, do not allow it to happen after a “drama” in the contact center, as the message relayed to the entire team is that indeed – “this is how it is, whoever shouts loudest, gets attention first.” You need genuinely to make the open-door routine so that it is not impacted by “drama management” throughout the day.

Here are a few ideas to help with your implementation.

- **Set regular and routine open-door days** – While the effectiveness of this option will depend on the size of the contact center, the dates should be consistent with a day of the week with lower-than-average contact volumes, so that the agents can really use it and you can be available to listen.
- **Issue an official email and notice** – This email can be sent to each member of the team regarding the next day and hours during which your office door will really be open, and wait for them.
- **Define time-slots of 15-20 minutes** – Is the contact center team too large to allow everyone to arrive at the same time? Ask agents, through the team leaders, to email in advance and book a time, keeping this issue under control.

If you already have an open-door policy (and stick by it!) consider asking all senior managers to go out and speak to a member of the team that they would not usually speak with at the start of every day. This can be a great way of boosting team cohesion.

3. Create a Control and Monitoring Routine

“A new procedure is issued here every day; they will probably forget about it tomorrow.” Is that so?!

These kinds of statements are not expressed only by agents. Many managers, at different levels, can empathize with this statement and use it often.

You sat down, gave it thought, planned it and brought a procedure to the floor, aiming to develop and promote the work processes in the contact center. Only a few know of the work behind the scenes – the time, energy and thought invested. Most people only know that there is a “new procedure” and that is where it ends.

The procedure is announced to the team during a briefing, but it will often dissipate and operations will carry on as normal, and the team will slip back into routine. Sound familiar? If this does indeed sound familiar, it is likely that you need to set aside time to routinely control and monitor new procedures to ensure that the contact center is continuously improving.

How to Implement a Control and Monitoring Routine

Learn from the experience of many managers who invest extensively in the building of work processes but eventually see them not being used in the current operations. Attribute the appropriate respect to your resource investment and fulfil a significant part of your role in contact center management by consistently performing control as a routine. That is easier said than done, right?

To help, here are four steps to help you on your way:

- **Step 1** – On the introduction of a new procedure to the floor, ask a team leader or a senior agent, who may want a little more responsibility, to provide you with a quick update of the impact it’s having on the contact center floor.
- **Step 2** – Do not stop there! Define the desired results which you will follow up – be as precise and clear as possible. Refining the desired result will help the entire team to get on board, to the benefit of actual implementation.
- **Step 3** – Set regular times in the schedule for control. During these times, stop everything and make sure the procedure is indeed being implemented on the floor, according to the results that you defined.
- **Step 4** – Speak to the team and gather their thoughts on the procedure, even in an incidental conversation. Keep your finger on the pulse; that is a key duty of every manager.

Many contact center managers have been promoted from other positions within the contact center and will carry on by following the lead of their predecessor and be drawn into constant “fire-fighting”.

However, implementing new processes is key to the contact center's progress, and to some extent the wider organization's growth. So, it's important to set aside routine times to put all of your focus on ensuring these procedures are implemented to the best possible standard.

What impact does real-time management have?

In the real world, plan and reality rarely coincide. That doesn't mean that you have to panic every time an unexpected spike of calls arrives or every time multiple agents call in sick. Real-time management enables the contact center to react swiftly and effectively in the face of challenges like these so that KPI goals are reached even when the unexpected happens. Without real-time management, all the effort spent on forecasting, staffing calculation, and scheduling may be wasted.

The work of a contact center manager includes many routines which we implement for the continuing benefit of everyone in the contact center.

Not all of these routines are simple to implement, but they help to ensure agents are engaged and that our schedules are flexible enough so that the contact center continuously improves.

While you may already have implemented at least one of these routines in the contact center, let's hope there's something here for you to put into action tomorrow morning.



Information Sheet – 2.1.6

Learning Objectives: To determine which KPIs do need for contact center WFM?

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: The Most Common Contact Center WFM Metrics

Content Summary:

The 11 most common contact center KPI metrics in the workforce management industry:

- 1-Average handle time (AHT)
- 2-Contact abandonment Rate
- 3-Forecasting accuracy
- 4-Occupancy Rate
- 5-Shrinkage
- 6-Utilization
- 7-Service Levels
- 8-Agent Absenteeism Rate
- 9-Agent Schedule Adherence
- 10-Agent Attrition Rate
- 11-WFM Analyst Efficiency

The 11 most common contact center KPI metrics in the workforce management industry:

1-Average handle time (AHT)

Average Handling Time (AHT) is a key measure for any contact center planning system, as it tells you how long a new item of work takes to be handled, and not just the talk time. In essence, it tells you how much time an agent spends working on a task and when they are unable to deal with a new work item.

This is an important metric on the WFM side, as well as a key component of all Erlang calculations, and unless you know this metric you cannot plan effectively.

From a WFM perspective, it's vital to know your full AHT for staffing purposes, but also to know what is happening at each of these phases. This helps you to identify the potential for improvement, whether that be shorter or longer calls, and plan your resources accordingly.

By analyzing the gap in handling time between different groups of agents, you can identify how workflow can be improved at each of the steps that combine to create AHT. If AHT spikes it can be an indicator that agents are handling interactions they may not be qualified to work on.

Why Is Average Handle Time Important?

Average Handle Time is important because it's an excellent metric to measure the effectiveness of your customer service department and your contact center's overall level of customer satisfaction.

Despite the increased number of available communication channels, nearly 70% of consumers say they still prefer to connect with customer service agents over the phone. But a 2021 TCN study shows **59% of customers say lost/wasted time waiting for a resolution is their biggest complaint about contact centers**. Interestingly, excessive average handle time is even more frustrating to customers than not having the issue resolved at all. Average handle time (AHT) is the average call duration that it takes to completely resolve a customer service issue or transaction from beginning to end.

It includes not only the length of the customer service call itself but also other factors like average customer hold time, number of rings it takes to reach an agent, amount of time customer spends interacting with IVR menu, follow-up calls, and after-call tasks.

Note that a contact center's average handle time is different from its First Call Resolution (FCR) rate. FCR measures the percentage of customer service phone calls where the caller's issue is completely resolved on their first contact with a representative.

In contrast, average call handle time measures the entire amount of time that it takes for an agent to resolve a customer service issue, whether that issue is resolved on the first phone call or requires multiple follow-up calls. Average handle time also applies to any other communication channel used to manage customer service queries, like live chat messaging, SMS texting, email, or video calling.

The Average Handling Time (AHT) Formula

The AHT formula for calculating AHT is as follows:

Average Handling Time (AHT) = (Total Talk Time + Total Hold Time + Total Wrap Time) ÷ Number of Calls Handled

$$\text{Average Handling Time (AHT)} = \frac{(\text{Total Talk Time} + \text{Total Hold Time} + \text{Total Wrap Time})}{\text{Number of Calls Handled}}$$

Wrap-up time may also be known as Wrap Time or After-Call Work time.

What is a good average handle time for a contact center?

A good average handle time for a contact center can only be determined by comparing yours to the AHT of other similar-in-size contact centers within your industry. Factors like NPS and overall CSAT levels should also be taken into consideration.

That said, the industry standard is 6 minutes and 6 seconds.

How do you manage average handle time?

Effective ways to manage and reduce your contact center's average handle time include:

- Re-evaluate employee training materials
- Invest in a contact center software that measures real-time and historical KPIs
- Improve call routing strategy and IVR system
- Ensure business phone system includes omnichannel live syncing
- Automate routine tasks and self-service options to eliminate the need for callers to speak to a live agent
- Improve internal knowledge bases
- Use call scripts

Why is AHT high?

Numerous factors contribute to a high AHT, including:

- Lack of knowledge from customer service agents
- Ineffective call routing/call forwarding paths
- A lack of automation
- Lengthy or insufficient IVR menu options
- Top few agents for current call volume
- Low-quality knowledge bases
- Few customers self-help options
- Poor workflow management

For Detail Worked Example , please see Job Sheet # 12 in our Job Sheet Section

2-Contact abandonment Rate

When AHT rises or your staffing levels are not sufficient, your contact abandonment rate can rise. This is the percentage of contacts that a team receives who terminate the conversation before speaking to an agent. It's a key WFM contact center metric to monitor because having a customer call in and hang up before speaking to anyone is a terrible experience that decreases customer satisfaction.

You can then use these forecasts to create a more effective staffing plan using an **Erlang Calculator** in our nine-steps process.

Generally, the lower your abandonment rate, the better.

Average Call Abandonment Rate

This metric measures the percentage of callers that abandon the call before connecting with an agent. Here's how to calculate this metric:

$$\text{Abandonment Rate: } [(\text{Total abandoned calls}) / (\text{Total incoming calls})] * 100$$

This is closely related to the average speed to answer metric, as customers usually hang up in frustration when they've to wait too long to reach an agent. An abandon rate of 5-8% falls in the normal range. But any higher percentage of dropped calls is a cause of concern and must be addressed quickly.

For Detail Worked Example , please see our Job Sheet # 15

Measure a metric called –Average Patience” by create call abandon graph:

Average Patience is a related metric that measures the length of time that callers are willing to wait on hold before abandoning the call. Contact centers track Average Patience to ensure that they are not keeping customers waiting for too long, which can lead to frustration and abandoned calls.

We will be able to create call abandon graph, that it draws a curve of what is causing your callers to abandon, while it will also predict you how many abandoned calls you can save by changing up your service level. Yet that's not all, as these graphs will also enable you to calculate a metric called –**Average Patience**”. This will be done on Calculate Staff Numbers through Nine-step process at Step 7: Work Out Your Average Patience under the **Information Sheet 2.1.7**

3-Forecasting accuracy

When a WFM analyst feels empowered by the right technology, the accuracy of each forecast often improves. Keeping an eye on how forecasts are performing is vital to success in the WFM industry and it's the foundation of the entire plan to build more accurate schedules. You also want to leverage legacy data via your WFM software to learn from the past so you can better predict the future.

This refers to the percentage by which the inbound customer contacts that were forecasted for a particular period varied from the number of contacts who contacted the center. In simple terms, forecasting accuracy refers to the difference between the forecasted contact load and actual contact load.

Why Forecasting Accuracy is important for every Contact Center?

- It allows stakeholders to understand whether they need to upscale or downscale their pool of agents
- Helps contact center make sure enough resources are available to cater to all clients
- Puts the growing load and the reasons into perspective
- Simplifies amplification of resources by providing accurate data

Forecasting is the cornerstone of WFM. If you get the forecast wrong, the whole process is unstable. That's why it makes sense for forecasting to take center stage in measuring WFM team performance.

One of the most important and challenging jobs in the contact center is forecasting demand. **Forecasting models** require constant refinement, so it's up to the planners to evaluate how accurate their predictions have been.

At face value, forecast accuracy might seem simple to calculate – were there as many contacts as predicted? On closer inspection, however, it's clear that businesses also need to understand exactly when contacts were made, and whether the contact center was prepared for them.

The Three Methods for Forecasting Accuracy

There are three common methods for calculating forecast accuracy in the contact center. These are:

- Percent Difference or Percentage Error
- Standard Deviation
- Correlation Coefficient

4-Occupancy Rate

What Is Occupancy?

Occupancy is the percentage time that agents take on call-related activity compared to the logged-in time. Call-related activity covers talk time, hold and after-call work (ACW).

So, if the contact center has an occupancy of 75%, it means that its agents are spending three-quarters of their time doing call-related activities”.

Occupancy is often referred to as utilization”, yet the two terms vary slightly. Utilization considers total time at work (including training sessions, meetings etc.), while occupancy only considers the time when agents are active on the contact center floor.

Occupancy is calculated as a percentage and represents the amount of time that agents spend on call-related activity while they are logged in and expected to be taking calls. Call-related activity includes talk time, hold time and wrap time. It is often referred to as productive time”.

“Occupancy answers the question: for what percentage of the time that agents are logged in live are they actually busy with a customer activity, or are they available to do more?”

It is typical for a contact center's occupancy to lie between 80 and 85%, and if your occupancy rate is at this level, it is likely that your Resource Planning team are doing a good job. However, if occupancy is consistently higher than 85%, you are risking agent burnout.

But remember, there is no recommended best-practice benchmark for occupancy, and targets should be set with a goal of continuous improvement in mind, balancing financial/budget requirements with employee needs.

Why Is It Important to Measure Occupancy?

Occupancy is especially important in schedule design, as it assists with measuring schedule optimization, so as not to have agents sitting and waiting for calls too often.

So, occupancy rates are a great indicator of the efficiency of your staffing calculations. But not only that, the occupancy metric is a key part of scheduling agents, if you do so with the [Erlang Calculator](#) and not workforce management (WFM) software.

In fact, top-of-the range Erlang Calculators will include an occupancy target. So, enter in your preferred occupancy rate (between 80 and 85%) and the calculator will give the ideal number of agents to match that percentage, which will also be based on the other information that you've provided. This other information will include contact volumes, Average Handling Time (AHT) and so on.

However, occupancy must only be measured on a contact center-wide level; it cannot be used as an agent target. Agents cannot control when they receive calls and shouldn't be pressured by handling times, so it's a measure for the Resource Planning team only and not a measure of agent productivity

How to Calculate Occupancy

Occupancy rate refers to the amount of time an agent is occupied with work – handling calls or finishing other non-call-related tasks.

To calculate contact center occupancy, first get a total of the amount of time each of its agents spends on **call-related activity** – from the time that they sign in, to the time that they sign out – on a day-to-day basis. This is called the **total handling time**.

The contact center would also need to tally the **total logged-in time** across the day. This is the total amount of time all agents have spent "signed in" over the course of the day.

Once the contact center has calculated these figures, it can then simply divide the number calculated for **total handling time** by the figure calculated for **total logged time** and multiply the result by 100, to find a percentage occupancy. The contact center occupancy formula is highlighted below.

The Occupancy Formula

Agent occupancy rate can be calculated as:

$$\% \text{ Occupancy Rate: } [(\text{Total work time}) / (\text{Total logged-in time})] * 100$$

Where **Total Work time = (Total talk time + Total hold time + Total after-call work time)**

While a high occupancy rate is desirable, managers should be mindful of the agent's workload and stress levels when setting benchmarks.

For Detail Worked Example , please see our Job Sheet # 16

5-Shrinkage

It is vital at all stages of the WFM planning cycle that you are looking at your **shrinkage levels**. Often, we talk about getting shrinkage down, but you need to remember that it is more than sickness and holidays.

When building a forecast, it is important to know what levels you are using in your model and if they match reality. It is good practice to show both options in your model, e.g. if we hit targets, this is the result we can expect vs. on current numbers we expect another result.

During scheduling it is important to add as much shrinkage as possible in advance so we can optimize and reduce the possibility of it being pulled. Real-time analysts need to be aware of shrinkages as they are happening. No one should be taken away from customer contact without the real-time team being consulted.

In the review stage, you need to monitor shrinkages to ensure they are happening. While you may want to drive down sickness levels, it is important that holidays are being used up so you don't have an issue at the end the year.

It is also vital that training, team meetings and coaching are happening at the correct levels. When these don't happen, you will see sickness and attrition rise

What Causes Shrinkage?

There are many reasons an agent might be away from the phone. Contact center managers have little control over some of the external factors affecting the time agents spend actually taking calls, though you can work to improve absenteeism and schedule adherence.

External Factors Include:

- Sick time
- Scheduled holidays and vacations
- Late arrivals
- Absenteeism

Internal shrinkage factors are time constraints that come from inside contact center operations.

Internal Factors Include:

- Lunch breaks
- Team meetings
- Employee training
- Post-call administrative work

Managers can have some control over these factors, though most are predictable and healthy parts of the normal workday. Not all shrinkage needs to be eliminated.

How Much is Too Much?

Remember, shrinkage doesn't always mean something is wrong. A certain amount of employee downtime is unavoidable and some of it even has a positive impact. For example, staff training and team meetings help you inform and educate staff. They help your agents feel engaged and improve your customer service. All good, right? So, how much shrinkage is too much?

A shrinkage level of 30-35% is average for contact centers.

But every contact center is different and what works for you will be unique to your business. Acceptable shrinkage levels can change from one team to another, too. To decide how much is too much, keep your eyes on other key metrics to see how shrinkage is affecting your contact center and set your benchmarks accordingly.

Too few agents assisting customers will likely result in callers spending more time on hold, affecting your CSAT Scores. Excess shrinkage rates can also impact other agents' performance, lowering their productivity and increasing agent dissatisfaction. Don't let high shrinkage rates start a domino effect that results in poor CX.

How to Control Shrinkage

Create a plan to address excess shrinkage in your contact center; these steps can help get you there! Share your plans and your progress transparently with your agents and work together to achieve your contact center's goals. If you can identify recurring pain points, you'll be able to correct small issues and help your contact center thrive.

1. Track employee schedule adherence and improve it where you can.
2. Monitor your shrinkage carefully, using annual overviews to improve future staffing projections.
3. Be thorough and accurate when scheduling: include meetings, training and time off in your calendar.
4. Monitor absenteeism and identify root causes and repeat absences.
5. Offer incentives and training to keep agents competitive and reward great performance.

The Shrinkage Formula

The Shrinkage Formula is as follows:

Shrinkage (%) = (Total Hours of External Shrinkage + Total Hours of Internal Shrinkage) ÷ Total Hours Available × 100

The contact center shrinkage formula is calculated by adding the total hours of external shrinkage and the total hours of internal shrinkage, then dividing this by the total hours available, before multiplying the result by 100.

For Detail Worked Example , please see our Job Sheet # 18

6- Utilization

This workforce management KPI metric can be directly linked with shrinkage. It is related to the number of hours each day an agent is available to log in and handle customer interactions. Companies may track utilization to better understand the impact shrinkage is having on their team.

What Is Utilization?

Utilization is the measurement of the percentage of agent time that is spent logged-in, handling and expecting customer interactions, while in the contact center. So, if your contact center team has a utilization rate of 80%, it means that your advisors are spending four-fifths of their scheduled time either productively helping customers or available to help them. The remaining time would be made up of internal shrinkage activities.

This KPI is often confused with occupancy, but it instead helps us to determine the percentage of time that advisors are available to handle contacts within the time that we pay them.

This is an important consideration, as your utilization figure is used as an input when calculating both shrinkage and overhead costs. High utilization will deliver a lower cost per interaction, but high utilization can damage agent's morale, if there is nothing in place to break up long spells on the contact center floor.

Agent Utilization is an inbound contact center metric that keeps a tab on the amount of time an agent was utilized fully during the day. A metric that strictly intakes only hours used to answer the call as input and doesn't concern time spent on paperwork or documentation. This can be calculated by dividing the number of calls answered within the first minute by the total number of calls answered by the agent.

Agent Utilization is a primary contact center metrics to focus on when trying to measure an agent's productivity. In simple words, agent utilization is defined as the ratio of work completed by the work capacity. **For example:** If a contact center agent is on call for 6 hours out of a nine-hour shift, then the utilization will be 66.66% for the day. (6 hours of work produced ÷ 9 hours of work capacity).

Some practices through which agent utilization can be improved are:

- Minimize the time between calls
- Equip agents with a script to help them answers call faster
- Provided timely breaks to make busy hours productive
- Provide up to date fast computers to process requests faster

How to Calculate Utilization

To calculate utilization, the first thing that the contact center needs to find out is the total amount of time its advisors are available to help, or are productively helping customers, over a certain time period. This is called this “Logged-in Time”.

Secondly, the contact center would need to tally the total number of shift minutes that their advisors have been paid to be in the contact center over the same period. Let’s call this “Total Paid Time”.

Once these two figures have been calculated, the contact center can simply divide their “Logged-in Time” by their “Total Paid Time” and multiply the result by 100, which will then find a percentage utilization.

The Utilization Formula

The Utilization formula is as follows:

$$\text{Utilization (\%)} = \text{Total Logged-in Time} \div \text{Total Shift Time} \times 100.$$

For Detail Worked Example , please see our Job Sheet # 17

7-Service Levels

What is the Purpose of Service Levels?

[Contact center service levels](#) are, broadly speaking, a commitment to a particular average speed of answer, or ASA. And for many Contact center managers, maintaining these service levels is a top priority. For some outsourced contact centers (BPOs), missing a service level could result in financial penalties — or even the loss of their contract!

With so much riding on this metric, it’s shocking to see how many contact centers choose their service level arbitrarily, or with minimal consultation. It’s not enough to blindly rely on the 80/20 rule, but many businesses are doing just that!

In the industry of Contact Center, performance metrics and resulting numbers are a challenging task faced by the managers. Theoretically one cannot understand the achievements in the field of the contact center. The managers have come up with techniques to quantify the results. The results indicate the improvement or decline in the performance of the Contact center in clear numbers.

In simpler terms, contact center **Service Level** can be defined as: **A number of services that can be measured provided to a customer in a defined time period. There remains some confusion with different formulas and definitions. However, in a contact center, managers mostly measure the percentage of inbound calls answered by agents in a set time period.**

What is a Contact center Service Level of 80/20?

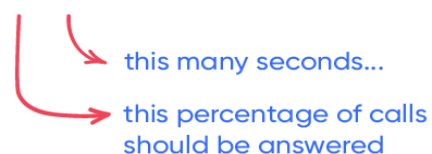
Service level is always given as a pair of numbers:

- A percentage values
- A time value in seconds.

An 80/20 service level in a Contact center simply means that 80 percent of the calls will be answered within 20 seconds.

Service Level

An “80/20” service level means within...



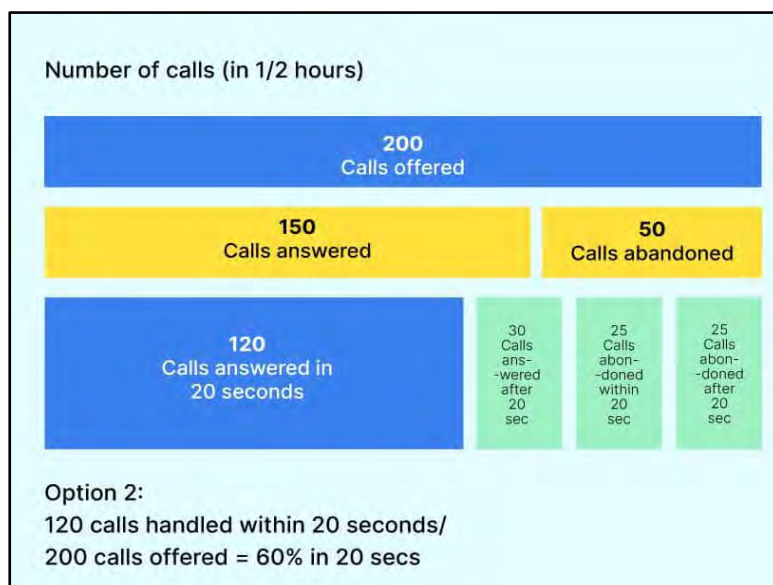
The Service Level Formula

The service level formula is simply the number of calls answered within the service level threshold divided by the number of calls offered, multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Service Level} = \frac{\text{Number of calls answered within the service level threshold}}{\text{Number of calls offered}} \times 100$$

This then gives you a percentage service level. It's really as easy as this.

For example, if a company has an objective to answer 80% of all calls within 20 seconds, the Service Level Threshold is 20 seconds.



Formulas and Calculation of Service Level

To understand let's take the following data

Time Period: 30 Seconds

Calls answered

Calls abandoned

Calls answered within first 20 sec

Calls abandoned after 20 sec

Calls abandoned within 5 sec

1st Formula

The simplest and widely used formula is the same as mentioned above

Number of calls answered in the time period/numbers of calls answered X 100%

However, you should take note that this formula does not take the number of abandoned calls into consideration.

2nd Formula

This formula takes the answered and abandoned calls into consideration for calculation. The calls abandoned within the threshold is deemed as positive

Calls answered in time period + calls abandoned in time limit / total calls answered + total calls abandoned X 100%

3rd Formula

In contrast to the 2nd formula, this one considers the abandoned calls as negative.

Total calls answered in time limit/ total calls answered + total calls abandoned X 100%

4th Formula

This formula ignores the number of calls abandoned within the threshold. The calls abandoned after the set time period are considered to affect the result.

Total calls answered in time period / total calls answered + total calls abandoned after time period X 100%

5th Formula

This formula includes the short calls. For example, the number of calls abandoned within 5 seconds as mentioned in the data.

Total calls answered within time period + calls abandoned within a shorter time than time limit / total calls answered + total calls abandoned X 100%

Contact center Metric Industry Standard – 80% of calls answered in 20 seconds

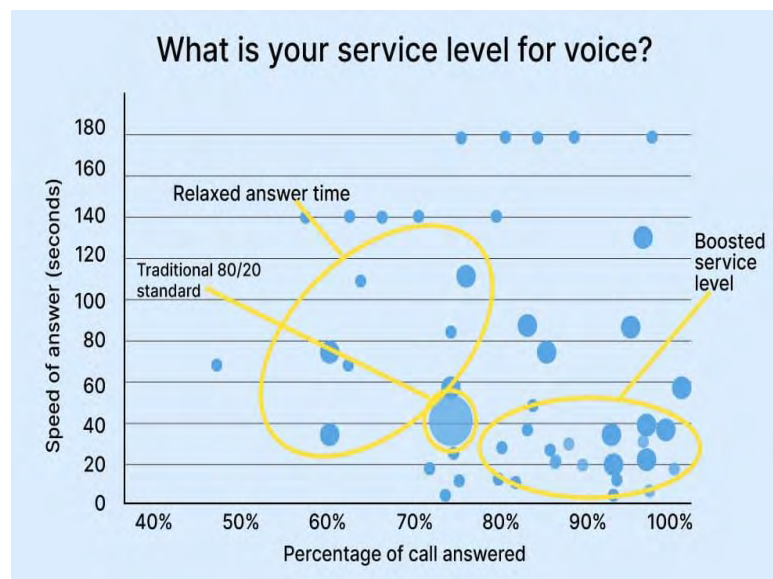
The traditional service level in the contact center is to answer 80% of calls in 20 seconds. However, over recent times, many contact centers have made an effort to improve service levels by attempting to answer 90% of calls in 15 seconds.

These results were uncovered in a 2019 Contact center Helper Survey and are well depicted in the graph below.

Best Practice to Calculate Service Level for your Contact center

Service Level when calculated frequently and defined clearly can help the Contact center management to make a data-driven decision. However, it may be confusing to establish how to measure the Service Level for their Contact center.

Hence, the best practices you call follow are



Abandoned Calls: Decide how to consider the abandoned calls, should they be counted or ignored.

Formula: Based on the kind of result you want and the kind of data you want to include, select your formula. Finding the ideal formula that works best for the objective of your Contact center would keep the calculation simple and provide clarity on the result.

Time Interval: Depending on the volume of calls in your Contact center and the needs, decide the time interval. The time interval also impacts the result of service level.

Frequency of calculating Service Level: It is ideal to monitor the service level of your Contact center continuously. But it may not be possible so you decide on the frequency of measuring service level that can effectively reflect the operation of your contact center.

Decide Service Level: It is important for a business to establish a service level. The service level objective should involve customer expectations, wait time, needs, and other factors that affect customer satisfaction.

Data from different sources: It is essential that all the departments present their service level data. Different departments may have different volumes of calls and so, the formula used may end up being different. For instance, the billing department may have longer calls than inquiries about addresses.

Right Tools: It is of utmost importance that your result is accurate in order to improve the performance of the contact center.

Identify the reason for the slowdown: Service Level can have an impact due to longer calls, incorrect schedules, different call volumes, etc. it is important to figure out what the issues are and study them before designing an action plan.

Display results to all employees: Service Level is impacted by each and every employee that works in a contact center. It should be displayed to the entire staff. This will help the agents understand the objective of the business and motivate them to achieve it.

Action and Adapt: You can't collect data and not take necessary action. The management should take full advantage of the data and analyze it to formulate plans to improve the performance.

Moreover, the industry of contact centers is always changing. Therefore, the service goal should also be changed and adapted according to the market.

Hence, it is essential to find the right software that can process all the data. Also, the tool should help you in making proper adjustments in regard to your contact center's measurement.

8-Agent Absenteeism Rate

Another reason why AHT can fluctuate is if the absenteeism rate for agents increases beyond normal levels. If there aren't agents in seats to take calls, AHT will naturally increase. [WFM software](#) can help in a major way to find the right replacement agents quickly when an agent calls in sick to lower this rate.

9-Agent Schedule Adherence

How exactly does an agent spend their workday? When they log in, agents often have a set schedule with specific windows for lunch and breaks. [Adherence](#), which can be monitored in real-time with WFM software, helps your team keep an eye on how agents are working in relation to the time they are scheduled. Adherence helps to ensure all shrinking is properly captured too.

10-Agent Attrition Rate

Agent turnover can have a negative impact on an organisation's performance. By understanding the reasons behind staff turnover, employers can devise initiatives that reduce turnover and increase employee retention.

11-WFM Analyst Efficiency

Before we dive into the agent-oriented indicators, setting up your WFM analyst with the right technology to do their job is essential. Is it taking them hours to create a forecast and generate schedules or minutes? Yes, the latter is possible, and the right [workforce management software](#) solution can be a huge asset to the overall efficiency of a WFM analyst.

For Detail Worked Example , please see our Job Sheet # 19



Information Sheet – 2.1.7

Learning Objectives: How to Calculate Staff Numbers through Nine-step process?

HOW TO WORK OUT: How Many Staff You Need

Content Summary:

Calculate Staff Numbers through Nine-step process

- Step 1: Work Out How Many Calls Are Coming into the Business
- Step 2: Work Out the Number of Calls for Every 30 Minutes/Hour
- Step 3: Work Out Your Average Handling Time (AHT).
- Step 4: Determine Your Service Level.
- Step 5: Factor in Maximum Occupancy.
- Step 6: Calculate Your Shrinkage.
- Step 7: Work Out Your Average Patience.
- Step 8: Plug the Numbers into an Erlang Calculator.
- Step 9: Map Staff vs. Shift Patterns

INTRODUCTION:

It is very important that you avoid the **most common mistake** in calculating staff numbers, because if you do not, you will be severely understaffed.

How NOT to Calculate Staff Numbers!

This **mistake** involves **dividing the total number of call minutes by the number of hours in a day.**

For this example, we have used the figures:

- 5,000 calls per day
- 3 minutes for Average Handling Time (AHT)
- 7.5 hours (the span of hours for which the contact center is open)

The process then follows as so:

- $7.5 \times 60 = 450$ minutes
- $450/3 = 150$ calls per agent per day
- $5,000/150 = 33$ **agents required** – **Wrong Prediction !!** this figure will leave you very understaffed. Because, this method does not consider factors such as:
 - Call volumes varying across the day.
 - Callers may be waiting for a long time to get through to an agent.
 - Holidays, sickness and meetings, etc.
 - Agent burnout

So, please avoid this method at all costs and instead follow **Nine-step process** in below.

We have condensed all the information that you need to make this calculation into an easy-to-use, **nine-step process**, and we have also covered what you should NEVER do when making this calculation.

Step 1: Work Out How Many Calls Are Coming into the Business

Step 2: Work Out the Number of Calls for Every 30 Minutes/Hour

Step 3: Work Out Your **Average Handling Time (AHT).**

Step 4: Determine Your **Service Level.**

Step 5: Factor in Maximum **Occupancy.**

Step 6: Calculate Your **Shrinkage.**

- Step 7: Work Out Your **Average Patience**.
 Step 8: Plug the Numbers into an **Erlang Calculator**.
 Step 9: Map Staff vs. **Shift Patterns**

Step 1: Work Out How Many Calls Are Coming into the Business

The first step in calculating your staffing needs is to work out how many calls are coming into your business.

There are many ways in which you can work out the number of calls coming into the contact center, but your method will depend on which sources of information you have access to and your contact center's background. As there is a difference between inbound and outbound calls, the needs of your contact center will be different.

The following list considers this and presents you with several options that you can use to make the calculation.

- If you are part of an established contact center, you should be able to take an accurate calls-per-day figure from your contact center telephone system, commonly known as an **Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system**.
- If you do not have access to ACD results, your call-logging system and/or switchboard will provide a suitable alternative. This is commonly found in **Call Detail Records (CDRs)**.
- Failing options a and b, a report from your telephone company may supply you with the relevant data if you are using managed numbers, e.g. 0096.
- Asking staff to manually log the number of calls coming into the contact center is an option if you do not have any of the information above.
- If you were to track the number of accesses coming into the **CRM system**, this could also reflect the number of calls coming into the business.

If you cannot use any of the options listed above, you should make an estimate by following the procedure below.

Firstly, you will need to know the size of your customer base, the number of days your contact center is open in a year and to make an estimation of the average number of times a customer will call each year.

For the example below, we have used the figures:

- Customer base: 30,000
- Number of calls each year, per customer: 2
- Number of days open each year: 250

However, these calls won't arrive evenly across the year.

Break Down Annual Call Volumes into Months, Weeks, and Days

Look back at your previous call volumes. Break down your annual call traffic into percentages which represent how much of this annual traffic you tend to get every month. For example, you may see a pattern like the one in the table.

By doing this, you can estimate monthly contact volumes from your annual forecast.

Then, again looking back through your old contact volumes, take this one step further by looking at each month individually.

Consider:

- How do contact volumes fluctuate in this month?

Month	Percentage of Calls
January	0.37%
February	4.66%
March	4.05%
April	5.52%
May	4.30%
June	6.13%
July	5.77%
August	8.83%
September	5.77%
October	7.12%
November	5.52%
December	6.01%

- Are there holidays in these weeks that could impact contact volumes?
- Is marketing planning any promotions in this time?

By asking these questions, you can split your monthly contact volumes into weekly contact volumes.

But we are not finished there. You will also notice that certain days of the week are busier than others. Typically, for instance, Monday is the busiest day in the contact center [US Standard].

So analyze what percentage of your weekly traffic falls on each day.

When you have done this, you can enter anticipated weekly contact volume, the number of hours you are open each day and those all-important percentages, into a trusty **Erlang Calculator**, like below.

Yet to achieve even better results, try breaking your contact volumes down even further. Apply these percentages to your weekly contact volume and calculate daily volumes.

Day	Percentage
Monday	23.8%
Tuesday	21.6%
Wednesday	19.5%
Thursday	18.6%
Friday	16.5%
Saturday	0%
Sunday	0%
Total	100%

Then move on to Step 2

Step 2: Work Out the Number of Calls for Every 30 Minutes/Hour

Just as calls don't arrive evenly throughout the week, they do not arrive evenly throughout the day. So, use your forecast daily contact volumes – which you have calculated in the previous step 1 – and forecast how many calls will arrive every hour or – better yet – 30 minutes. **There are two methods for doing this:**

Option 1 – The Easy Way

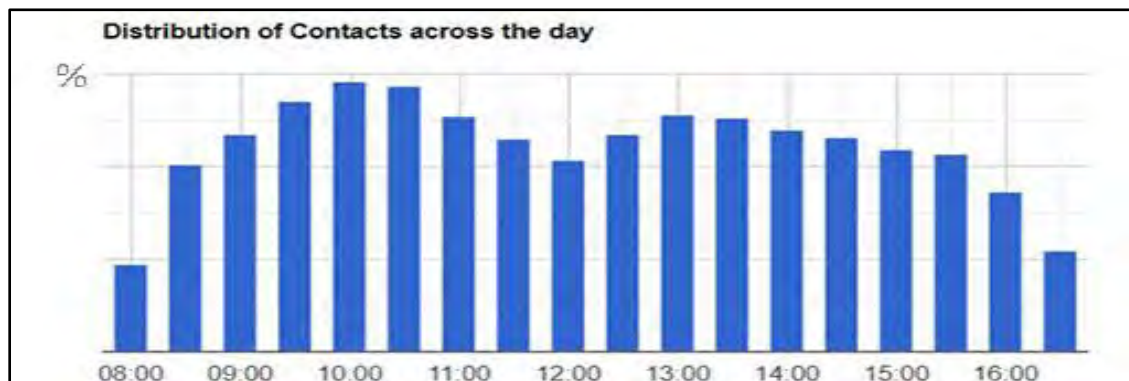
This is easily done if you have an ACD system or a Call Detail Report (CDR) for your contact center.

Date	Incoming Calls	Answered Calls	Service Level	Avg Speed Answer	Avg Waiting Time	Total Abandon Calls	Avg Handling Time	Avg Hold Time	Total Held Calls	% Held Calls of Answered Calls
01-Nov-16	139382	136546	76.16	26	15	2836	184	38	29672	22
02-Nov-16	4511	4213	78.18	23	13	98	155	23	1011	15
03-Nov-16	5270	5177	78.59	23	13	93	206	39	1398	19
04-Nov-16	3114	3023	74.75	28	16	91	151	32	605	23
05-Nov-16	3226	3130	85.88	14	8	96	161	32	470	23
06-Nov-16	3828	3731	70.18	33	21	97	208	46	821	19
07-Nov-16	4841	4743	91.12	7	4	98	210	48	759	16
08-Nov-16	4738	4639	94.97	2	2	99	177	28	1067	21
09-Nov-16	3205	3109	78.57	23	14	96	173	26	839	17
10-Nov-16	3297	3207	90.46	8	5	90	184	31	834	20
11-Nov-16	3561	3471	76.03	26	14	90	189	43	937	24
12-Nov-16	5952	5861	63.02	42	28	91	198	40	1582	17

As you can see from the table above, your ACD system will be able to provide you with masses of information, including the number of calls that come into the contact center over a defined period of time. While the example given shows the daily report from the ACD system, it can also provide you with information for your desired time span. In this case, every half an hour or hour.

Option 2 – The Harder Way

If you don't have access to the information above, you can make an accurate estimation. This is best done by using a call-arrival pattern similar to the one below.



This pattern shows the profile of a contact center's demand across a typical day. You will need to create one of these for your contact center.

To do this, analyze your contact volumes to find out what percentage of calls you receive across every half-hour or hour period on a typical day.

By doing so, you will create a set of results, just like in the table:

Time Interval	Percentage of Calls
9:00	5.36%
9:30	6.19%
10:00	7.21%
10:30	7.74%
11:00	7.63%
11:30	6.75%
12:00	6.10%
12:30	5.49%
13:00	6.20%
13:30	6.80%
14:00	6.69%
14:30	6.37%
15:00	6.13%
15:30	5.78%
16:00	5.66%
16:30	3.90%

Use these percentages to create your call-arrival pattern and split your expected contact volumes for the day into 30-minute periods.

Step 3: Work Out Your Average Handling Time

This Step already done on the information sheet of 2.1.6 WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: The Most Common Contact Center WFM Metrics, SI # 01. And Job Sheet # 12.

Step 4: Determine Your Service Level

This Step already done on the information sheet of 2.1.6 WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: The Most Common Contact Center WFM Metrics, SI # 07. And Job Sheet # 19.

Step 5: Factor in Maximum Occupancy

Now we have set a service level, we need to recognize that agents cannot spend 100% of their time on the phone for extended periods of time. This is where occupancy, the amount of time agents spends on the phone over the course of the thirty minutes, comes in.

Maximum occupancy is often a factor that is ignored in the process of calculating how many agents you need in the contact center. This doesn't make any difference in a small contact center but is a major factor in why so many larger contact centers are understaffed.

To understand whether you need to take occupancy into account, you first need to set an occupancy target, just as you would for service level.

But how do you know what your occupancy rate is?

This Step already done on the information sheet of 2.1.6 WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: The Most Common Contact Center WFM Metrics, SI # 04. And Job Sheet # 16

But if every contact center has an occupancy rate, why does it matter for large contact centers and not for those that are smaller?

This is because, when call volumes increase, so does the number of calls an agent has to take in 30 minutes, meaning that occupancy gets higher and higher. This increase in the "staff workload ratio" is highlighted in the table below.

Traffic Intensity (Erlangs)	Number of Staff Needed to Meet Service Level	Average No. of Calls Per Agent (Staff Workload Ratio)	Occupancy Rate (%)	No. of Calls per 30 Minutes
8.7	12	8.3	72.5	100
43.6	49	10.2	89	500
87.2	94	10.6	92.8	1000

The figures in this table have been calculated using an AHT of 180 seconds and a target service level of answering 80% of calls in 20 seconds.

What they show us is that at 1000 calls, the occupancy rate is 92.8%, which, although we encourage agents to be productive, just is not realistic.

So, just like service level, set a target, which would usually be somewhere between 85-90%, which can be entered into the Erlang calculator.

Step 6: Calculate Your Shrinkage

The information gathered in the previous five steps will allow you to work out the raw number of agents needed to answer the phones in the contact center, but it does not take shrinkage into account.

Shrinkage is the amount of paid time that an employee is not available to do productive work, such as answer phone calls, despite being scheduled to do so.

There is both internal contact center shrinkage – where an agent is in the contact center but cannot answer the phone – and external shrinkage – which is when an agent is out of the contact center due to sickness, holidays, emergencies etc. Both need to be factored in.

Generally, shrinkage in the contact center accounts for 35% of staff who are not using the telephone at any given time. However, this is just an industry standard, and it is important for you to accurately **calculate your shrinkage** in order to provide a precise number for how many staff you need.

To Calculate Shrinkage rate, we already done on the **information sheet of 2.1.6 WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT: The Most Common Contact Center WFM Metrics, SI # 05. And Job Sheet # 18**

Step 7: Work Out Your Average Patience

After completing step, we will be able to create call abandon graph, that it draws a curve of what is causing our callers to abandon, while it will also predict how many abandoned calls you can save by changing up your service level. Yet that's not all, as these graphs will also enable you to calculate a metric called **–Average Patience–**.

This activity on how to measure a call abandon rate by practicing two following tasks:

Task-I: Plotting a Call Abandon Curve

Task-II: How to Predict Call Abandon Rates Based on Service Level

Task-I: Plotting a Call Abandon Curve

To plot your Call Abandon Curve, you should:

1. Gather around two days' worth of Call Detail Records
2. Extract the call-waiting times of the customers who hung up before being connected to an agent
3. Insert the data into an **Excel spreadsheet**
4. Put the data in numerical order – starting with the shortest call-waiting times
5. Calculate the percentage of customers by call-waiting time. You should start with 00.00 = 100% and then stagger the rest of your results in intervals of seconds or minutes (depending on the level of detail you want). Your results should begin to look something like this:

100% 0:00,
90% 0:12,
80% 00:19 etc...

6. You should then plot your graph, with the X-axis as *time* and the Y-axis as *percentage left in queue*.

Once you have plotted your Call Abandon Curve, you will be able to identify the point where you lose most of your callers, and can begin to do something about it.

Here we try to plot 2 curves, the call-abandon times for a sales line and call-abandon times for a technological support line. After plotting, you may see the graphs like below:



As you can see, after 1 minute only 38% of people are still waiting on the sales line, whilst 65% of people are left on the technological support line.

While the Call Abandon Curve for the technological support line is noticeably better than that of the sales line, both curves could stand to be improved with a few simple changes.



Task-II: How to Predict Call Abandon Rates Based on Service Level

STEP 1 – Assess Previous Abandon Rates When the Contact Center was Operating at Various Service Levels

The first step to predicting call abandon rates would be to identify periods where the contact center was operating at its best and worst service levels, noting the abandon rates at each. Then, make a note of the service level and abandon rate during each thirty-minute reporting period over the past couple of weeks.

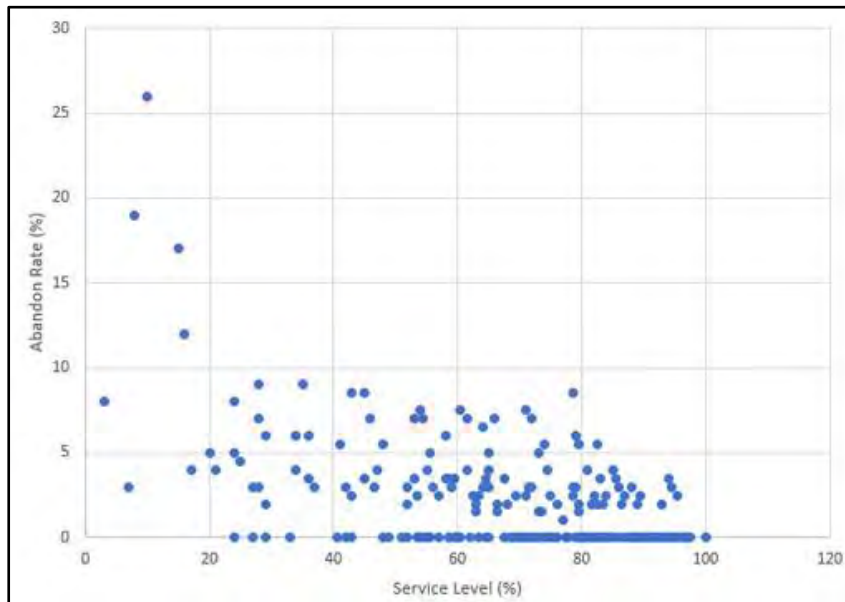
This information can be taken from a call abandons report. A mock-up version of this is presented below:

Date	Time	Inbound Calls	Average Speed of Answer (mins)	Average After Call-Work Time	% Within Service Level	Abandoned Calls	% Abandoned Calls
29/03/2017	Totals	2,711	00:19	00:11	79.5	375	14.3
29/03/2017	9:00 - 9:30	165	00:09	00:10	85	14	8.5
29/03/2017	9:30 - 10:00	152	00:11	00:08	84	15	10
29/03/2017	10:00 - 10:30	156	00:18	00:13	79	20	12.8
29/03/2017	10:30 - 11:00	158	00:18	00:11	80	18	11.4
29/03/2017	11:00 - 11:30	164	00:25	00:14	76	26	15.9
29/03/2017	11:30 - 12:00	167	00:19	00:12	80	25	15
29/03/2017	12:00 - 12:30	189	00:23	00:10	77	30	15.9
29/03/2017	12:30 - 13:00	181	00:26	00:11	76	33	18.2
29/03/2017	13:00 - 13:30	194	00:28	00:09	74	35	18
29/03/2017	13:30 - 14:00	178	00:24	00:15	77	31	17.4
29/03/2017	14:00 - 14:30	182	00:25	00:10	76	32	17.6
29/03/2017	14:30 - 15:00	175	00:19	00:11	79	28	16
29/03/2017	15:00 - 15:30	170	00:15	00:10	83	18	11
29/03/2017	15:30 - 16:00	159	00:18	00:09	81	18	11.3
29/03/2017	16:00 - 16:30	155	00:17	00:13	81	17	11
29/03/2017	16:30 - 17:00	166	00:12	00:06	84	15	9

STEP 2 – Create a Scatter Graph from This Information

Once this information has been gathered, specific to one contact center, a scatter graph should be created, plotting abandon rates and service level against one another.

Having done so, it is likely that the scatter graph will look something like the mock-up version we have created, which is shown below:

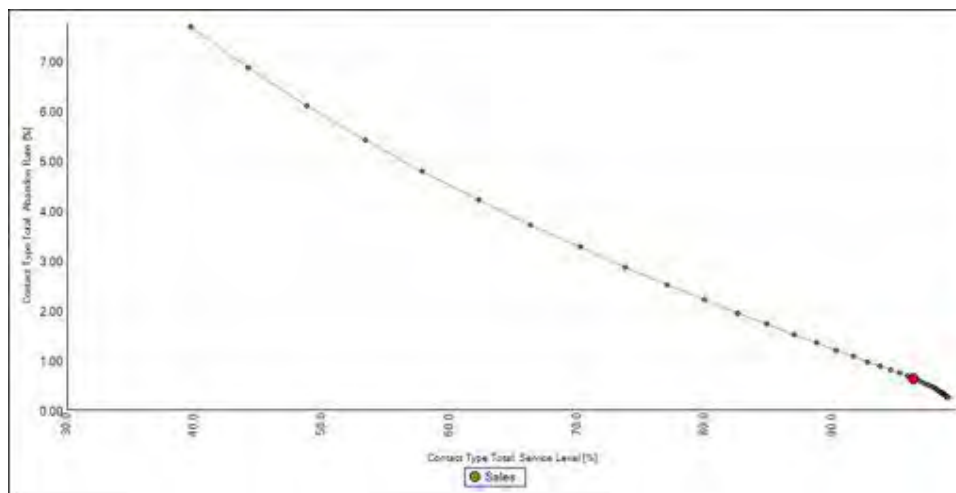


STEP 3 – Find Correlation and Fit a Curve to the Graph

In plotting the scatter graph above, it is likely that some sort of correlation will be found. When this pattern is realized, all that is left to do is fit a curve to represent the relationship between the two metrics.

For the scatter graph above, we found the following line of best fit:

This correlates between varying metrics, using the data that the technology gathered. The relationship between service level and abandon rates for one contact center followed the pattern shown below:



Using this curve, a contact center can predict their call abandons when they are operating at a certain service level.

For example, if the graph above represented the old data from my contact center, and it was operating at a 70% service level (10% below the industry standard), I could predict that I was losing over 3% of callers who are phoning in.

Step 8: Plug the Numbers into an Erlang Calculator

By completing each of the steps above, you will have collected lots of information, which you can enter into online Erlang Calculator. Erlang Calculator is better than most as it allows you to determine how many contact center agents you need during each 30-minute period of the day, with specific reference to shrinkage, occupancy and average patience.

The example below shows the number of agents calculated by our **Erlang Calculator when:**

- Reporting period = 30 minutes
- Average number of calls during the reporting period = 1000
- Average Handling Time/Average Call Duration = 180 seconds
- Required Service Level = 80% (industry standard)
- Target Answer Time = 20 seconds (industry standard)
- Percentage Shrinkage = 35%
- Target Occupancy = 85%
- Average Patience = 90 seconds

Call Centre Erlang Calculator		
Calculate the number of staff required to reach an agreed service level		
Incoming contacts	<input type="text" value="1000"/>	
in a period of	<input type="text" value="30 Minutes"/>	
Average Handling Time (AHT)	<input type="text" value="180"/>	seconds
Required Service Level	<input type="text" value="80"/>	% Answered In
Target Answer Time	<input type="text" value="20"/>	seconds

Advanced Options (Based on Industry Averages)		
Max Occupancy (What's this?)	<input type="text" value="85"/>	% Percent
Shrinkage (What's this?)	<input type="text" value="35"/>	% Percent
Average Patience (What's this?)	<input type="text" value="60"/>	seconds
Working Hours Per Week (1 FTE)	<input type="text" value="37.5"/>	hours
Reporting Interval	<input type="text" value="30 Minutes"/>	
<input type="button" value="Hide Advanced Options"/>		
<input type="button" value="Calculate"/>		

In this example, the Erlang Calculator determines that 182 agents should be deployed.

Your Results



By doing this for every reporting period across the days, you can work out your daily headcount and start devising schedules to best meet demand.

Step 9: Map Staff vs. Shift Patterns

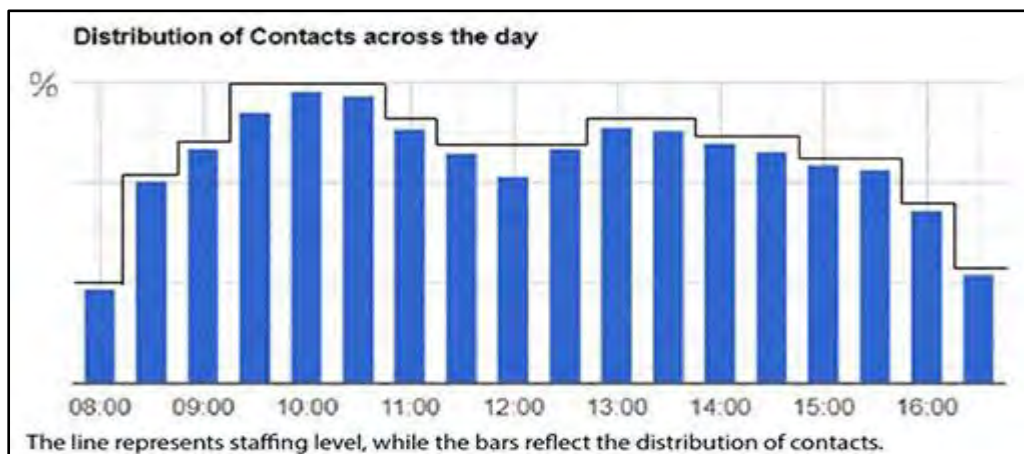
While it is important for you to match the call-arrival pattern with the number of agents available to answer the phones, it would be implausible to hire staff for 30-minute periods every day.

In order to match agents against call volumes, there are a number of ways to ensure that you have an optimum level of agents working in your contact center. These include:

- Stagger break and lunch periods to ensure adequate coverage
- Use part-time staff to cover peak periods
- Hold team meetings during quiet periods

Adding a day planner to your staffing calculations, with help from the Erlang Calculator – Day Planner, will help you manage this.

If you do this successfully, you will always have the optimum number of staff in your contact center and they will be blocked around the call-arrival pattern, like in the graph below.



As you can see from this example, calls will tend to build up between 8am and 10am, with the busiest period of the day being from 10am to 12pm. This gives contact centers the ideal opportunity to stagger the start of agent shifts at the start of the day.

There are also many other shift patterns that you can experiment with. Experimenting with shift patterns like this, you can determine the best way to meet demand in your own contact center

We already cover this step on information sheet 2.1.4 CONTACT CENTER SCHEDULING: Shift Pattern and Staff Bidding.



Self-Check Quiz – 2.1.7

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: What are **nine-step process** used for the calculating staff numbers in contact center?

Question-2: How many shift patterns that you can experiment? Please describe.



Answer Key – 2.1.7

Answer-1:

- Step 1: Work Out How Many Calls Are Coming into the Business.
- Step 2: Work Out the Number of Calls for Every 30 Minutes/Hour.
- Step 3: Work Out Your **Average Handling Time (AHT)**.
- Step 4: Determine Your **Service Level**.
- Step 5: Factor in Maximum **Occupancy**.
- Step 6: Calculate Your **Shrinkage**.
- Step 7: Work Out Your **Average Patience**.
- Step 8: Plug the Numbers into an **Erlang Calculator**.
- Step 9: Map Staff vs. **Shift Patterns**.

Answer-2:

There are many other shift patterns that you can experiment with. These include:

- **Rotational shifts:** These help to balance the popular and unpopular shifts amongst your agent population. They are, however, falling out of fashion because very few of us lead rotational lives.
- **Fixed shifts:** This shift type is a contractually agreed working pattern. Contact centers often use these in combination with part-time shifts to plug gaps in the schedule.
- **Part-time shifts:** Popular with students, parents and late risers, these shifts can add a huge amount of flexibility to the schedule.
- **Split-shifts:** When agents work split-shifts, they effectively work two shifts with a gap of a few hours in between. These are popular in contact centers where call volumes plummet in the middle of the day and remote centers where the agent doesn't have to travel twice.
- **Annualized Hours:** This pattern requires your staff to work a certain number of hours every year, with more hours expected to be fulfilled during your busiest periods.



Learning Outcome 2.2 - Develop team for contact center



Contents:

BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS: Produce high performance results

TEAM COLLABORATION: Defined roles and responsibilities

BUILDING TRUST IN YOUR TEAM: Ensure continued success



Assessment Criteria:

1. Five (5) Stages of Tuckman Ladder for team development is demonstrated.
2. Agents are selected as per service requirement.
3. Role of team members is identified.
4. Responsibilities of team members are assigned through internal meeting.
5. Steps for building trustworthy team are applied.



Resources Required:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Workplace (actual or simulated).
- Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.
- Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activities – 2.2

Learning Activities	Resources/Special instructions/References
2.2 Develop team for contact center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet: 2.2.1 to 2.2.2 • Self-Check quiz: 2.2.1 to 2.2.2 • Answer key: 2.2.1 to 2.2.2



Information Sheet 2.2.1

Learning Objectives: You will be able to describe key characteristics of effective teams and how contact center can build teams that produce high performance results.

BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS: Produce high performance results

Content Summary:	
Key Characteristics of Effective Teams	
Common Techniques for Team Building	
	Set team goals and priorities.
	Select team members carefully.
Optimal Team Size	
	The ideal size to form a team according to Jeff Bezos
Tuckman's 5 stage model of team development	
I.	Forming,
II.	Storming,
III.	Norming,
IV.	Performing, and
V.	Adjourning.
Group activities for each stage of team development	
Team roles and responsibilities-Key Collaboration Process Roles	
	Convener
	Recorder
	Monitor
The imperative of effective teams	
	Social loafing

Characteristics of Effective Teams

Many studies have been completed on the topic of what effective teams look like. They agree on key characteristics that effective teams share. The chart that follows identifies skills and attitudes that help teams function effectively.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS	
Clarity of Purpose	The purpose of the team must be clearly defined in concrete and measurable objectives. Effective teams know how their work contributes toward an organizational goal. The team leader reminds members of how each team member makes business success possible.
Good Communication	Open and accurate communication both between the team members and between the team and the larger organization is critical to keep members informed, motivated and focused. Part of the communication process involves establishing roles, making plans, and following standard business protocols and procedures.
Positive Role for Conflict	We will look at the role of positive and negative conflict in more detail later in this module, but generally effective teams use conflict to improve decision-making and problem-solving processes.

Accountability and Commitment	Each member of the team understands his role on the team and takes responsibility for his actions. Team members take proactive measures to ensure that they can complete tasks, and they alert management when a problem arises. Members of effective teams not only know the team's purpose but are committed to achieving it and demonstrate the behavior needed to meet the goals. Team members have the authority to do what they need to do without being checked every step along the way. Finally, members must be incentivized and rewarded on both an individual and team basis.
Shared Leadership	Effective team members are willing to assume leadership roles when appropriate. Shared leadership reinforces a sense of shared responsibility and increases morale and team performance.
Positive Group Dynamics	Interpersonal relationships in effective teams are built on trust, respect, honesty, and acceptance. Conflict will still occur, but a positive group dynamic will focus the conflict productively.

Common Techniques for Team Building

Once you know the characteristics of effective teams, how do you go about building those qualities into a group? When initially forming the team, follow these procedures and techniques to help create the environment needed for the development of those characteristics.

- **Set team goals and priorities.** This step supports the key characteristic of clear goals. Team members need detailed explanations of how their individual actions contribute to the achievement of the team goals. Team priorities should be established so that members can understand when and where to provide additional help if needed. Individuals need to understand how their personal SMART goals support the team goals and how supporting the team also allows them to meet their own personal goals. If personal goals and team goals are not interdependent (for example, if a team goal is not specifically tied to a personal goal), then the employee most likely will focus on her own needs to the detriment of the team. Good communication skills are required to make sure that the goals are written clearly and that team members know their performances will affect the team goal and thus each other's performance.
- **Select team members carefully.** Three factors should be considered when selecting people for a team: **individualism**, the average level of **experience and ability**, and the **degree of diversity**.
 - It's a fact that some people make better team members than others. It's also a fact that with determination, anyone can learn to function on a team. **Individualists** generally put their personal welfare and interests first, and they prefer independent tasks in which they work alone. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the **collectivist**, who prefers cooperation to competition and is happiest working in a group. Although collectivists generally make better team members, there are many instances when independent tasks are part of a larger team effort. It may take more effort to communicate with the individualists, however.
 - The **experience and ability levels** of team members should be balanced so tasks can be distributed with high expectations of the work being done. At the same time, newer employees need to become a fully functioning part of the workforce, and this can happen by teaming them with the more experienced people. It is also important to select people based on their skills and leadership potential.
 - **Team diversity** represents not only the mix of skills and experiences, but also how people of varying culture, ethnicity, race or gender work together. Diversity is a good defense against groupthink because of a different outlook and belief system that challenges common assumptions.

Optimal Team Size

There seems to be no question about the right size of many teams. Basketball teams have five players (on the court), football is played with eleven members on the field, and a bridge team is made up of only two players. Businesses don't have rules for the proper size of a team. Jeff Bezos, CEO and founder of Amazon, has his own rule for the right-sized teams: the team should only be as big as can be fed with two pizzas. By normal standards, that would suggest five to eight people on a team. Bezos is said to have followed this guide when he created the innovative and decentralized start-up that has grown into one of the most successful companies in the country.



When in doubt about the right size of your team, you can always fall back on the ~~two~~-pizza rule.”

The ideal size, according to most management experts, falls within the range of five to nine people. The reason the size is so important that it is the focus of research studies has to do with processes and outcomes. Too few people and the team may not have enough resources or skills. Too many people and communication becomes more challenging. Groupthink and social loafing may occur and negatively affect team performance. In one study, it was determined that teams with more than twelve people had greater conflict and formed subgroups that disrupted the team cohesiveness.

Experts also agree that the optimal size of the team is driven by other factors: what type of task the team will perform, what skills the team requires to complete the task, and the time provided to complete the task. Answers to those questions will often determine the best size for a team. If the task, for example, is a sales function, then one individual may do most of the work until the very end, when a finance and delivery/inventory manager gets involved. One business may be fortunate to have four employees with multiple skill sets whereas another company would have to include six or seven people to reach the same level of abilities. Finally, the shorter the timeframe to complete the task, the fewer the people should be on the team. Larger numbers increase complexity of communication and administration.

Five Stages of Team Development

Effective teams don't just happen. They are the result of a development process through which members learn to work together and support team goals. Teams become high performing when the members have worked through their individual differences and have agreed on standard values that control behaviors. Teams are effective when the development process results in strong relationships and high performance.

Taking talented individuals and turning them into a high-performance team is always a challenge. Add in the realities of today's work environment, and the issues of creating and coaching a collaborative and trusting team take on new dimensions.

Leveraging a bit of behavioral psychology can help. It all starts with the stages of group development discovered by Bruce Tuckman in 1965.

What is Tuckman's model of team development?

Tuckman's model of team development recognizes that groups don't form spontaneously or immediately. Rather, they develop through clearly defined stages, eventually transitioning from strangers with singular ambitions to a dynamic group of collaborators with a like-minded focus.

Tuckman—a behavioral psychologist—originally came up with his team-building theory in 1965, when his research revealed that groups of all kinds followed a common four-step pattern when forming into teams.

Twelve years later, in collaboration with Mary Ann Jensen, he expanded the theory to include a fifth stage, which took into account the disbanding of the team once it reached its goals.

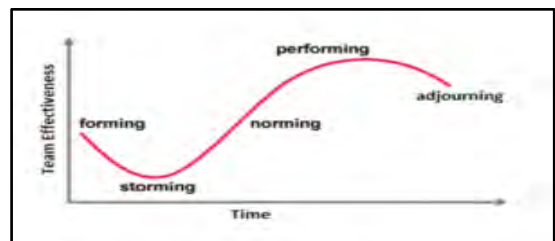
For over 50 years, managers and team leaders across many industries—including health and social care, the military, and software development—have leveraged Tuckman's stages model to reach their desired results.

Stages of Team Development

This process of learning to work together effectively is known as team development. Research has shown that teams go through definitive stages during development. Bruce Tuckman, identified a five-stage development process that most teams follow to become high performing.

He called the stages:

- I. **Forming,**
- II. **Storming,**
- III. **Norming,**
- IV. **Performing, and**
- V. **Adjourning.**



Team progress through the stages is shown in the diagram. Most high-performing teams go through five stages of team development.

Forming stage

The forming stage involves a period of orientation and getting acquainted. Uncertainty is high during this stage, and people are looking for leadership and authority. A member who asserts authority or is knowledgeable may be looked to take control. Team members are asking such questions as "What does the team offer me?" "What is expected of me?" "Will I fit in?" Most interactions are social as members get to know each other.

Storming stage

The storming stage is the most difficult and critical stage to pass through. It is a period marked by conflict and competition as individual personalities emerge. Team performance may actually decrease in this stage because energy is put into unproductive activities. Members may disagree on team goals, and subgroups and cliques may form around strong personalities or areas of agreement. To get through this stage, members must work to overcome obstacles, to accept individual differences, and to work through conflicting ideas on team tasks and goals. Teams can get bogged down in this stage. Failure to address conflicts may result in long-term problems.

Norming stage

If teams get through the storming stage, conflict is resolved and some degree of unity emerges. In the norming stage, consensus develops around who the leader or leaders are, and individual member's roles. Interpersonal differences begin to be resolved, and a sense of cohesion and unity emerges. Team performance increases during this stage as members learn to cooperate and begin to focus on team goals. However, the harmony is precarious, and if disagreements re-emerge the team can slide back into storming.

Performing stage

In the performing stage, consensus and cooperation have been well-established and the team is mature, organized, and well-functioning. There is a clear and stable structure, and members are committed to the team's mission. Problems and conflicts still emerge, but they are dealt with constructively. (We will discuss the role of conflict and conflict resolution in the next section). The team is focused on problem solving and meeting team goals.

Adjourning stage

In the adjourning stage, most of the team's goals have been accomplished. The emphasis is on wrapping up final tasks and documenting the effort and results. As the work load is diminished, individual members may be reassigned to other teams, and the team disbands. There may be regret as the team ends, so a ceremonial acknowledgement of the work and success of the team can be helpful. If the team is a standing committee with ongoing responsibility, members may be replaced by new people and the team can go back to a forming or storming stage and repeat the development process.

Group activities for each stage of team development

As your newly formed team starts its journey together, it's helpful to have some team-building activities to help nurture team members through each phase of team development.

For example, let's say you are heading up a group in your marketing department dedicated to the launch of a food product for a new client. The campaign will last six months. About half of the members of your creative team are full-time workers who know each other well and have been with the company for years. The other half are remote freelancers hired for this specific campaign. No one among the group of independent talent has worked with anyone from the company before. Because you're managing a distributed team, a big focus will be on boosting collaboration between employees and freelancers.

Consider the following activities to strengthen amity among members on your creative team.

Stage 1: Forming activities

Forming is all about getting acquainted with the company and team members. The following activities—which everyone can participate in over video conferencing—can be helpful ice breakers:

Introductions. Match up each team member with a new team member. Each will tell the other their name, what their job on the team is, and two fun facts that most people don't know about them. Each person will then introduce the other to the group.

Client trivia. Since the client you'll be working for is new to the company, everyone is on the same footing when it comes to having limited knowledge about the client and the specific product. Divide the group into two teams. One team will have 30 minutes to research the client and the other will have 30 minutes to research the new product. Each team will then have one hour to collaborate to create a 15-minute presentation about the facts they uncovered. Schedule a video call for the presentations and then open up the virtual floor for discussions about the client and the product.

Pet pictures. Nothing brings people together like their pets. Have everyone change their online avatar to a picture of their pet for the day. For people who don't have pets, encourage them to take a picture of something (or someone) else in their home they are fond of. You might lose a little productivity on pet-picture day, but you'll more than make up for it in newfound rapport among team members.

Stage 2: Storming activities

Storming stage activities usually center around conflict resolution and the easing of tensions.

- **Use video whenever possible.** Since your full-time workers and remote freelancers are still learning to work together, encourage them to use video whenever possible, especially when resolving issues. The key is seeing people. When workers can see each other's expressions and body language, they'll be much more likely to empathize and work toward a resolution.

- **Give compliments.** A great storming stage activity is to help remind people that everyone was brought into the team because they have something valuable to contribute. Encourage full-time team members to complement and thank the freelancers for their contributions when appropriate. As the new kids on the block, the temporary creatives may feel insecure about how their work is being evaluated by the team. It's important for team leaders and management to also model this behavior.
- **Look how far we have come.** Map out a visual representation—an infographic or a slide deck—of the team's progress so far. This helps everyone realize that even though they are just getting started, and there is some tension in the air, they are working toward a common goal. Accomplishments to date could be as simple as creating workflows and doing brand research. As long as the team has moved forward in some capacity as a unit, this visual representation should resonate.

Stage 3: Norming activities

During the norming stage, you really want to give the team a wide berth as the members find their way to the performing stage. It's not unusual for some members of the group to propel the team back, at least temporarily, into storming. If you want to engage in a team activity, consider hosting a virtual happy hour or some other lighthearted excuse for freelance creatives and full-time team members to meet for reasons other than work.

Stage 4: Performing activities

Performing is the culmination of all the hard work your team has put in to date. While it may be tempting to take a sigh of relief, the last thing you want is for your team to start resting on their laurels. You might consider keeping the momentum going with these activities.

- **Think about the future.** This is similar to the “look how far we have come” visualization except you are creating it as if you are living a few months in the future. The idea is to keep the team pumped up by imagining where they are headed and what it will feel like to look back on even more success. Canva is a free drag-and-drop platform that team members can use to create virtual future-vision boards.
- **Ask three questions.** Since your team is in a creative flow, it's a perfect time for some constructive feedback. Get the hive mind working by asking the team these three important questions:
 - What is working?
 - What isn't?
 - What can we do better?
- **See what sticks.** This is a rapid-fire brainstorming game where the group gets together to throw around ideas about innovative ways to push the project over the finish line. If your team is on its way to completing the food product campaign, you can focus the group on brainstorming ideas for future adjourning activities. The point is to get your freelance creatives and full-time team members engaged with each other. Set up a video call and encourage all ideas—including off-the-wall ideas.

Stage 5: Adjourning activities

Adjourning is a time to acknowledge accomplishments while bringing closure to the team's work. The independent professionals will be moving on to their next contract engagements, and full-time team members will be moving on to other projects.

If you engaged in the “think about the future” activity during the performing stage, consider repurposing the vision board to evaluate whether the team accomplished what it set out to do. Get the group together on a video call and invite everyone to share their experiences of working with the team. Challenge each team member to acknowledge the ups and downs of the campaign, discuss the lessons learned, and provide suggestions on how to apply skills, knowledge, and insights they gained to their next engagements.

Once this post-mortem is concluded, you might want to send each team member a personal thank-you note acknowledging their unique contribution or organize a group celebration.

Team Roles and Responsibilities- Key collaboration process

Whether you're a newly formed team or you've been working together for years, there's likely room for improvement in the ways you communicate and collaborate. By giving everyone on the team defined roles and responsibilities, you can better coordinate and avoid duplicate efforts and missed opportunities.

Some key collaboration process roles to consider are the meeting **convener, recorder, and monitor**. Depending on the nature of your team, each of these roles can be subdivided into more specific roles for your team, and these don't necessarily need to be aligned with your functional roles in the organization. Think of these as separate working titles for your specific team.

The **convener** is a role the team leader often takes at least partially, especially if he or she is accountable for the outcome of the team's efforts. Convening includes everything from determining whether or not a meeting is needed, to ensuring the agenda is developed and shared, to scheduling the actual meeting time and place.

The **recorder** is responsible for keeping detailed notes on the discussion that takes place during the meeting. Notes should include a list of the participants, a summary of the discussion associated with each agenda item, and a list of the next steps. Any follow-up items should have names associated with them, so that it's clear who will be acting on whatever next steps you've discussed. Shortly after each meeting, this person should send a copy of the minutes to the team and give participants an opportunity to clarify or add to the document as needed. The action items from the minutes are often a topic for the agenda of the next team meeting.

A **monitor** will help the group stick to the agenda items and keep the discussion within the time allotted. Keeping groups focused, particularly if you're meeting virtually, can be extremely challenging. It's really easy to get off topic. This person should feel comfortable interrupting the discussion if it goes off in a tangential direction. When this happens, the monitor may ask the recorder to note that this topic needs to be an agenda item for a future meeting.

Some teams divide out these roles and keep them the same for every meeting. Others swap roles on a regular basis to make sure this important labor is evenly distributed throughout the team. However, you choose to assign responsibilities, having defined roles will help you keep your team meetings focused and meaningful. If your team is operating without assigned process roles, add this to your next meeting agenda.

The imperative of effective teams

Most teams underperform their potential. If you refine your ability to collaborate and work well in a team, it can be career-altering. These skills will help you become a team member who is trusted and respected for your ability to help the team reach its goals. At the outset, some people feel hesitant about working on a team project. Before knowing the techniques included in this course, worried they would end up doing the lion's share of the team's work, or they might damage relationships with colleagues by redoing their work without sharing feedback. Challenges related to working in teams are tied to interpersonal, intrateam communication and collaboration. There's also a phenomenon at play in the background called social loafing. The easiest way to describe it is when people on teams slack off because they know someone else will pick up the slack. You can combat social loafing in your teams by implementing best practices for team communication. The work you're invested in is worth getting right, so come back to this content to refresh your memory on the best practices when things aren't going as well as they could be, or when you join a new team. In the meantime, continue investing in yourself. It's the surest bet you can take.



Self-Check Quiz – 2.2.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: What are the key characteristics of effective teams?

Question-2: Which three factors should be considered when selecting people for a team?

Question-3: What is the ideal size to form a team according to Jeff Bezos?

Question-4: Which three activities might consider keeping the momentum in performing stage?

Question-5: High-functioning teams often have three roles for meetings. What are they?

Question-6: What is social loafing? How to reduce it?



Answer Key – 2.2.1

Answer-1: Key characteristics of effective teams:

- Clarity of Purpose
- Good Communication
- Positive Role for Conflict
- Accountability and Commitment
- Shared Leadership
- Positive Group Dynamics

Answer-2:

Three factors should be considered when selecting people for a team: **individualism**, the average level of **experience and ability**, and the **degree of diversity**.

Answer-3:

Jeff Bezos, CEO and founder of Amazon, has his own rule for the right-sized teams: the team should only be as big as can be fed with two pizzas. By normal standards, that would suggest **five to eight people** on a team.

Answer-4: You might consider keeping the momentum going with these activities in performing stage:

- Think about the future.
- Ask three questions.
 - What is working?
 - What isn't?
 - What can we do better?
- See what sticks.

Answer-5: Convener, Recorder, Monitor

Answer-6:

The easiest way to describe it is when people on teams slack off because they know someone else will pick up the slack. You can combat social loafing in your teams by implementing best practices for team communication.



Information Sheet 2.2.2

Learning Objectives: You will be able to explore some strategies you can use to build trust and ensure continued success within your team.

BUILDING TRUST IN YOUR TEAM: Ensure continued success

Content Summary:

Build trust in your team

Credibility jar

Say-do gap

Building a company culture of trust

6 steps for building trust within your workforce

1. Hold yourself accountable
2. Advocate for your team
3. Address problems openly and early
4. Encourage open communication and feedback
5. Make time for bonding
6. Empower workers

An environment where workers don't trust each other creates situations where professionals can't excel, and the business doesn't reach its potential. These workers may compete against their team members rather than working toward mutual success on projects.

This type of thinking makes it harder for people to collaborate or communicate and engage in teamwork. Their work ethic and effort may suffer to the detriment of everyone involved. And since these professionals don't have a strong connection to their organization and team, loyalty also diminishes—possibly leading to retention issues.

Build trust in your team

Trust is essential in teams. In order for teams to do their best work, teammates must be able to trust each other. You need to know I've got your back, and I need to believe that about you also. Without a strong foundation of trust, you have a group of individuals operating out of sync and on shaky ground. Your teammates need to trust you'll follow through.

If you set the expectation you'll attend a meeting, complete a task, or contact a client, it's important that you follow through. If for some reason you don't or you can't, it's important to offer that information upfront. It's better they hear it from you rather than someone else. We often make commitments, maybe about things we don't think are a big deal, and don't follow through.

Think of your credibility as a jar you're filling with coins. Each time you complete a task as expected or follow through, you're adding coins to your **credibility jar**. If you miss a deadline or task, you empty your jar. And for some people, you literally leave a small hole in the bottom of your jar. This means as you try to build back up your credibility, it requires more coins to get to the same place, because some have slipped through the base of your jar. So what can you do to avoid this? Pay attention to the **say-do gap**, and work to minimize or eliminate it altogether. What do I mean by say-do gap? This is the difference between what you say and what you actually do.

Teammates need to trust each other's intentions. If you trust someone, you believe they have your best interests at heart. This means they don't speak negatively about you behind your back, make belittling jokes, or make you feel incompetent. Teammates are protective of the psychological and

emotional wellbeing of each other. If you trust your team, you aren't worried about sounding dumb if you present an innovative idea. On a related note, teammates need to trust it's okay to share opposing viewpoints. Our instinct is to shoot for group harmony. So we choose to keep quiet instead of risking conflict or upsetting someone on the team. Instead, we need to strive to create a culture of psychological safety, or a climate where people feel comfortable sharing unique knowledge or ideas. This is where the magic happens on teams. Bringing together people with diverse perspectives isn't productive when teammates aren't comfortable sharing what they know.

Finally, teammates need to trust you know how to get the work done. It's a question of competence. Even if I completely trust your follow-through, your intentions, and your sincerity when you speak, I also need to fundamentally believe you are competent. Are you capable doing the work that's being asked of you? When a teammate jumps in and micro-manages a project, or provides help to a teammate who doesn't need it, they can sow distrust. Trust is fragile. It requires a lot of consistent effort to build, and sadly it can be diminished in an instant. As a result, rebuilding trust is a more difficult and prolonged process. Take the time to build relationships and trust with your teammates. As Simon Sinek said, "A team is not a group of people who work together." A team is a group of people who trust each other."

How trust can fuel your teams success-

Building a company culture of trust can:

- **Improve team collaboration.** When team members know they don't have to compete against each other and trust that everyone is working toward the same goals, it enhances collaboration. Employee engagement improves as people begin to work together.
- **Achieve better worker retention.** A work environment where workers constantly worry about competing with colleagues, office politics, or gossip increases stress for everyone. In fact, research shows that professionals who feel high levels of trust at their organizations report 74% less stress, which subsequently reduces burnout and increases retention.
- **Result in better team alignment.** Team members that trust each other will also align themselves toward a common company goal. Rather than everyone working in isolation, they'll be more likely to collaborate.
- **Improve decision-making.** In an environment centered around trust, people feel more open to contribute to discussions and can bring up different viewpoints and ideas. This ensures that decisions are made with a complete set of information, and team members feel they have a stake in the outcome.
- **Give productivity and innovation a boost.** When team members don't have to worry if others will meet deadlines or deliverables, work gets completed more efficiently. Team members also feel more open to sharing their ideas, paving the way toward exciting innovation.

6 steps for building trust within your workforce

It's essential to build trust in your workforce to ensure continued success. However, it can be hard work to encourage trust among team members. Here are list six steps that will help build trust among employees so you can begin reaping organizational benefits.

1. Hold yourself accountable

Team members take guidance from their leader. Leaders who demonstrate consistency by holding themselves to the same standards as everyone else and have the expertise and insight to guide projects can play a critical role in the trust others feel toward them.

Focus on setting a good example for the team in all activities. If you have insight or productive feedback to give, offer it. If you make mistakes, admit them to the team and take steps to correct the problem upfront and honestly.



2. Advocate for your team

Your team wants to know they can count on you to advocate for them as their leader. If the team experiences success, share the credit so that the team knows you recognize their contributions and great work. If mistakes are made, don't try to share or cast blame. Instead, have a "fix it" attitude that inspires team members to look for solutions instead of covering their tracks.

Similarly, if someone comes to you with a problem or bad news, don't get angry with the messenger. Let them know that you appreciate the insight so that the group can collectively find a solution. This will encourage lines of communication to stay open.

3. Address problems openly and early

If problems arise during a project, make an effort to address the issue openly and early. Hiding problems only allows them to fester, and attempting to hide issues can hinder success and encourage others to hide issues or mistakes, as well.

For example, there may be tension among team members, causing a lack of communication that bottlenecks a project. Consider meeting with team members to figure out how to solve their issues. Maybe there's confusion regarding responsibilities and clarification from you can get the project back on track.

Addressing problems openly and early makes it clear that your primary focus is on team success. This strategy allows workers to find solutions rather than wasting time casting blame.

4. Encourage open communication and feedback

You want team members to know their opinions are valued and that you want to hear what they have to say. The more you encourage open communication and feedback, the more your team will feel free to share.

A great way to put this into practice is to establish one-on-one meetings. Ask team members how they feel about the team or organization as a whole. Do they feel heard and respected? Are their ideas taken into consideration? Do they feel comfortable sharing their feedback with you and other

leaders? If necessary, ask for suggestions on how things can improve and then create a concrete plan for implementing those suggestions.

This builds trust in the workplace because people begin to understand that you and the team as a whole value their ideas. These professionals will feel part of a team, rather than individuals with their own goals.

At the same time, you need to be open and communicative, as well. Communicate company priorities, be honest about why certain decisions are made, share bad news in a tactful way, and keep everyone in the loop about shifting responsibilities.

5. Make time for bonding

Provide opportunities for team members to come together and bond. Cultivating relationships helps team members understand each other and improve their communication.

Bonding can take many forms. For example, [remote teams](#) can host occasional coffee breaks through video conferencing or dedicate time through chat software to discuss their personal lives. Even small check-ins can help nurture goodwill in the company.

6. Empower workers

Building a relationship of trust also calls for empowering workers. Give them the tools and opportunity to do their work independently without constant oversight. Show them the trust you have in them by granting them authority to make certain decisions independently. When team members know they're trusted to do their work well by management, they become more engaged and ready to perform.

With distributed teams, in particular, you need to trust that remote and independent workers are doing what they're assigned unless they've given you a reason to doubt them. Don't micromanage them or focus on how long it takes them to respond to your emails. Give them a chance to prove themselves before stepping in.

Transform your team with trustworthy talent

Knowing how to build trust within your team can encourage productivity and help your team accomplish its goals. A team where members trust each other will collaborate better and do a better job of aligning their objectives with the rest of the organization. Following the steps above can help you build a team based on trust and position your organization to grow.

As you begin to build your team and incorporate the talent you need to accomplish your projects, you'll want to find professionals who are skilled, cooperative, and consistent enough to function as trusted members of broader teams.



Self-Check Quiz – 2.2.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: Which strategies you can use to build trust and how?

Question-2: Which six steps that will help build trust among employees?



Answer Key – 2.2.2

Answer-1: Building a company culture of trust can:

- **Improve team collaboration.** When team members know they don't have to compete against each other and trust that everyone is working toward the same goals, it enhances collaboration. Employee engagement improves as people begin to work together.
- **Achieve better worker retention.** A work environment where workers constantly worry about competing with colleagues, office politics, or gossip increases stress for everyone. In fact, research shows that professionals who feel high levels of trust at their organizations report [74% less stress](#), which subsequently reduces burnout and increases retention.
- **Result in better team alignment.** Team members that trust each other will also align themselves toward a common company goal. Rather than everyone working in isolation, they'll be more likely to collaborate.
- **Improve decision-making.** In an environment centered around trust, people feel more open to contribute to discussions and can bring up different viewpoints and ideas. This ensures that decisions are made with a complete set of information, and team members feel they have a stake in the outcome.
- **Give productivity and innovation a boost.** When team members don't have to worry if others will meet deadlines or deliverables, work gets completed more efficiently. Team members also feel more open to sharing their ideas, paving the way toward exciting innovation.

Answer-2:

The following six steps that will help build trust among employees:

1. Hold yourself accountable
2. Advocate for your team
3. Address problems openly and early
4. Encourage open communication and feedback
5. Make time for bonding
6. Empower workers



Learning Outcome 2.3 - Apply robust coordination and communication system



Contents:

COMMUNICATION WITHIN TEAMS: How high-performing teams communicate



Assessment Criteria:

1. Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)/ Responsible, Accountable, Consult, inform (RACI) chart are described.
2. Elements of team charter are identified and described.
3. Cross-functional team communication techniques are interpreted.



Resources Required:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Workplace (actual or simulated).
- Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.
- Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activities – 2.3

Learning Activities	Resources/Special instructions/References
2.3 Apply robust coordination and communication system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet: 2.3.1 • Self-Check quiz: 2.3.1 • Answer key: 2.3.1



Information Sheet 2.3.1

Learning Objectives: You will be able to apply concrete strategies to improve your communication, ability to collaborate, and ultimately your output.

COMMUNICATION WITHIN TEAMS: How high-performing teams communicate

Content Summary:

Delegate responsibilities

Use a RACI matrix to track and assign responsibilities:

- R- Responsible
- A- Accountable,
- C- Consulted
- I- Informed

Collaborate to establish team goals and charter

Use SMART, or SMARTER goals, or some other performance metric

Define expectations in your team

Manage accountability within teams

Five W's of accountability for teams

Cross-cultural communication within teams

LESCANT- A model to help the cultural issues in cross-cultural business communication

- L- Language
- E- Environment
- S- Social Organization
- C- Context
- A- Authority
- N- Nonverbal
- T- Time.

Measure success within teams

In the past few years, collaboration was listed as one of the top five skills employers need the most. Your ability to work well with others on a team is essential for developing your career in just about every field, from health care to government, sports, education, tech, and the military. I could go on. We find ourselves working in teams, why? Because research shows that effective teams produce better outcomes than individuals or uncoordinated groups. And yet, many teams struggle to reach their potential. Or to put it another way, as Malcolm Gladwell has said, "The kinds of errors that cause plane crashes are invariably errors of teamwork and communication. You're probably wondering how can teams reach their highest potential? The secret to a high-functioning team is excellent intra-team communication. We will walk you through the practices of high-performing teams and the pitfalls of inefficient teams. You can apply these concepts to your collaborative efforts right away, and the exercise files will help you plan ways you can implement these strategies in your own organization. By the end of our time together, you'll have concrete strategies you and your team can use to improve your communication, ability to collaborate, and ultimately your output. Let's dive in.

Delegate responsibilities

You have all the right people on your team, but how do you know who is doing what? And, when is it appropriate to loop in other team members or stakeholders? Sharing all information with everyone can be inefficient, but how do you make sure the right people have the information they need at the right times? You can use a RACI matrix to track and assign responsibilities related to the specifics of your project.

RACI is a responsibility matrix or tool you can use to keep each other informed and collectively hold each other accountable. RACI stands for **responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed**. In this chart,

you'll clarify task roles and responsibilities related to your team's goal. Some benefits of using RACI include that it one, improves team efficiency, two, reduces redundancies or overlaps, and three, coordinates your team's efforts at multiple levels. There's a template you can download of the RACI matrix in the exercise files so you can take a look at this tool. As you think about the scope of your project, you can probably divide it into multiple sub-components or action items. List these in the left column. Then, put each person on the committee, or their functional area, across the top part of the chart. Then, you'll fill in the table, assigning each action item to a person in your working group. Start with **R, responsible**. This is the person who is completing the specific task and is responsible for its implementation. **Accountable** is the person who's held responsible by management. This person usually has the authority to decide whether a task is a go or no-go and often has the resources needed for the task. The **consulted** are people who are asked for advice about the task, but don't actually do any of the heavy lifting. These individuals are usually consulted before any decisions are made. The individuals who are **informed** are those who are aware of the decisions and actions. They are people who need to know what's happening but don't get involved in the decision-making process or implementation. By defining team roles and responsibilities, you're establishing the processes that'll make collaboration on your team run smoothly. Now you've got the right people on your team and everyone knows who is doing what as you move toward your goals.

Collaborate to establish team goals and charter

As a team, it's important to be in alignment on your goals, purpose, and process for collaborating. Otherwise, you are like a group of rowers on a boat rowing in different directions, and different paces. You will want to spend some time discussing your purpose.

Why has your team been convened?

What is it about this specific group of people, and the unique task at hand, that you as a group have been trusted to address?

And how will you do it?

When it comes to setting goals, choose a template that makes sense for your team, whether it's KPIs, SMART, or SMARTER goals, or some other performance metric.

Make sure your team collectively establishes shared goals for your work together. There are several great courses on this topic in the LinkedIn learning library if you need guidance on goal setting. Once you've established your goals, take a few minutes to discuss your conditions of satisfaction. These are the minimal requirements to reach completion of a project. Conditions of satisfaction are different than goals. If your team's goals are on the high end of what you hope to accomplish as a group, the conditions of satisfaction are on the low end. What's the bare minimum everyone will be comfortable with having completed? For example, for students, the goal in a course might be to earn an A on an assignment, but the condition of satisfaction would be a passing grade. Teams often set lofty goals initially, but adjust their expectations once the work requirements are understood. Having a clear definition of what is acceptable before you start your project, will save you time, and frustration down the line. With your goals and conditions of satisfaction in mind, you'll want to develop a team charter.

Develop a team charter

A document that outlines commitments for how your team will collaborate on your work together. This document should spell out all of your expectations around the process, for how you'll work together to accomplish your goals. Typical team charters include, ground rules for team meetings, norms for communicating with each other, details for how you'll make decisions, consequences for not meeting expectations, and what you'll do if you experience conflict. The idea is to spell out the ways you plan to work with each other, to help avoid misunderstandings, or clashes in working styles. I'm including a team charter template in the exercise files, so you can see an example of what this looks like. Assigning roles for communicating in team meetings, and establishing conditions of satisfaction will help get your team in sync, and make sure you're all rowing in the same direction.

Define expectations in your team

Reasonable people with the same goals will approach projects differently. This is why it's critical for teams to document expectations and norms for how they'll work together. Take for example Ted and Fred. Ted is one of those people who gets a burst of energy right before a deadline, and does his best work under pressure. Fred on the other hand likes to plan out every detail and pace the work evenly to completion. You can easily see how this led to friction among teammates. Left unspoken, this friction turned into a simmering conflict, trust eroded, and everyone involved couldn't wait to get out of the project. This could have been avoided with some constructive conversations to communicate clear expectations. The team's charter should establish some ground rules for how to handle these types of things. I've added some questions to help you think through these topics in the exercise files. After your team has decided on norms for communication, operating procedures, and general expectations, you can document all of this in your team charter. Let's join a newly-formed team to see how they can course correct to a more effective communication plan around expected behaviors. This team quickly developed a charter, and now frictions can easily be observed. It looks like you're the first team to finish your team charter. I have a copy of it right here. Do you guys feel comfortable that you're all in alignment on your team's expectations? - Yeah, I think so. - Definitely. - Definitely, yeah. - Okay. Well, since I wasn't in the meeting I'd love to get a better sense of your team's expectations. As I look at this here I want to start with a simple one. Your charter says that all team members are committed to delivering work product on time. If a report is due on Friday what does that really mean, or when is it really due? - First thing, eight a.m. - End of day, five p.m. - I would think five p.m., but because it's the weekend and people aren't going to be working probably eight a.m. on Monday. - Sounds like you should set aside some time to revisit your answer to that question. Okay, I see here that you're committing to starting and ending meetings on time. Let's circle back to the beginning of this meeting. (air whooshing) (clock ticking) - Hello? - Hey, hello, can you hear me? - I'm over here. - Did I miss anything? - No. - Great. - Oh, your audio. Do you think we should text her? - Yeah, maybe. - Oh, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry guys. All right. - Yeah, let's get started. (air whooshing) - Sounds like this is another topic you'll want to go back and clarify. All right, one last question. I see here that you've noted you're going to use chat, email, and texting for communicating with each other. Okay, which is your primary method? - Text. - Phone call. - Slack. - Sounds like you'll want to go back and have a discussion about that as well.

When it comes to texting have you talked about ground rules or boundaries for when this is okay? - Well, it's a text so any time's okay, right? - I would think that we'd have like maybe an hour or two before or after work as the limit unless it's an emergency. - I see. It sounds like this is another topic you'll want to circle back and discuss. And when you're having that conversation decide what are the parameters for what constitutes an emergency so you're all in alignment about that as well. At the beginning of your project set aside an hour for a deep dive into the questions I've provided to help you think through your team charter. It's important to get everyone's expectations in alignment before you get started. From the meeting you just observed you can see how easy it is for there to be misunderstandings about expectations on a team. Make sure to take the time to clarify the details of your teammates' expectations, and document them in your team charter.

Manage accountability within teams

Imagine this scenario, you're leaving the office for the day and realize that one of your teammates forgot to complete part of your project that's due to the client the following morning. You finished your part and you have plans you want to keep. This isn't the first time this teammate has been late on their part of the project. Why does this keep happening? Well, chances are, your teammate isn't intentionally sabotaging your project or trying to keep you from your plans. But if this doesn't get addressed, how do you prevent this from happening again in the future? This is where documenting expectations can be very helpful for your team. There are a number of things that need to be clear to everyone on the team. I think of these as the five W's of accountability for teams.

Five W's of accountability for teams

The **first** W is what. What specifically needs to be done? What is the task or tasks that must be accomplished?

Second we have when. What's the deadline for getting this finished? If the deadline is Tuesday, what time? If the product goes to the client on Tuesday, should the team have a chance to review it prior to

that? If so, is our internal deadline actually Monday? Or, if we need to allow time for edits and changes to the draft, should we set Friday as our internal deadline?

Third, who is going to take the lead in finishing this specific task? Ideally, you'll assign each task to one person and one person only. Others may be involved, but having one person who needs to track the details and progress is important.

Fourth, why. Why is this task or project important? How does it fit in the grand scheme of your team or organization's work? Who benefits from your work and who suffers if we fall short? Sometimes people gloss over the reasons for a task. I'd advise against that.

And finally, **the fifth W**, what happens if a task is or isn't completed accurately, on time, or to any other project specifications? In other words, what are the consequences of failing to meet expectations? And consequences don't have to be negative. Don't think of this as a punishment, per se.

A consequence of meeting a deliverable on time and under budget might be a bonus for everyone on the team, or, a miss deadline might result in canceling a team dinner at a nice restaurant. It's easy to quickly run through these details during a meeting to make sure everyone is on the same page. Let's watch Carrie confirm the five W's with a teammate. - All right, great. I'd like to close out my meetings and making sure we're all clear on the next steps. Nicole, were you able to finalize the color palette and typography for our style guide? - Yeah, I can have that by Wednesday. - Great, great. And you'll be able to get fully formed paragraphs done, you know, making it look pretty much published ready? - I thought you only needed bullet points. - Let's take the time for a publish ready version of the draft. Do you think you can have this to the team by 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday? - Yeah, I can do that. - Excellent. This is really going to allow our team to streamline a lot of our communication tasks. And if we can't make that deadline, we're going to have to push the publication date into the holiday weekend. - Notice at the end, Carrie shared what would happen if the deadline was missed. As a team, it's important to agree on consequences for when the team meets or fails to meet group expectations.

Accountability means we celebrate our wins together and we learn from our mistakes together, no finger pointing or blaming. Accountability in teams is a loaded topic. It's tricky. In the meantime, remember to document expectations around the five W's to help keep your team accountable.

Cross-cultural communication within teams

It's well established that today's teams are global and teams that harness their diverse perspectives and talents have better outcomes than those who don't. And yet, communicating across cultures can present some challenges. A model to help you think through the cultural issues that can come up in cross-cultural business communication is abbreviated as LESCANT. This points to seven areas, **language, environment social organization, context, authority, nonverbal, and time**. To consider in international business settings, I'll briefly highlight some things to consider in each of the seven areas, starting with **L, language**. When it comes to your language, use clear and basic phrasing whenever possible. While everyone on your team may be using the same language, it's easy for information to get lost in translation. The same words can have different meanings in different parts of the same country. Keep in mind, everyone on your team may not have the same level of language fluency, and that may influence how they participate in group discussions, especially if things unexpectedly come up. It's easy to confuse language proficiency with confidence, but that can be a mistake. A teammate may have strong evidence to support an idea and have some trouble articulating it, or vice versa. In terms of **E, environment**, what external cultural factors impact your team's work or dynamics? This can include aspects of your physical realities and a host of other external factors. Next, how are the cultures represented on your team **socially** organized? How do religion, race, gender, and class factor into the societies your team is constructed of? One example that can be tied to friction on teams is how people view individualism versus collectivism. The next letter, **C, is context**. Which of your teammates are from high- or low-context cultures? In a high-context culture, communication is explicit. Communicators are direct and verbalize every word they need to get their point across. In a low-context culture, communication is implicit and relies more on non-verbal cues, silence, and the unsaid. Recognizing these subtle differences will improve your team's communication. The next consideration, **A, is authority**. How do your teammates view authority? Our perspectives on authority, power and leadership style are all informed by our cultural background and personal preferences. If there are hierarchies based on title or age within your team, keep in mind that may prevent some teammates from pushing back on

an idea from a more senior teammate. Our **N, nonverbal communication**, speaks volumes. Within your team, pay attention to the things that are unsaid. If you notice from their body language that a teammate seems to withdraw or might want to speak, but can't get into the conversation, you can be an ally for that person by creating an opening for them. If you don't want to put them on the spot, follow up individually and find out how your teammate wants you to act in the future. Remember, the best ideas don't necessarily come from the chattiest people. **And finally, T is time**, which I'd argue is our most valuable resource. How individuals perceive time and their schedules varies. Some teammates may see time as more fluid or flexible, whereas others follow a more exact and literal timing. The LESCANT model gives us seven considerations for communicating in our cross-cultural teams. If you don't know how your teammates think about each of these categories, plan to have a discussion about these topics and link them to your team charter. Your team is only as strong as your ability to effectively communicate across cultural boundaries.

Measure success within teams

Right now, you might be struggling to complete a project or maybe you're ahead of schedule and under budget. If you don't know exactly why that's happening, how can you fix a problem or replicate the success? Measuring and reflecting on your team's progress is critical for long-term success. Plan to evaluate your efforts at targeted points on your timeline when major deliverables are completed, and especially at the end of a project. This doesn't have to be formal or a lengthy process. As a professor, I do a version of this regularly. Rather than wait until the end of the course to get feedback, I typically survey my own mid-semester evaluations. If I need to pivot or make adjustments to the course, I can do so in real time. Your team can monitor and measure your progress by conducting an after action review. The process is simple and straightforward, and when done well, it's extremely powerful. Start by setting aside a team meeting for this discussion. Let everyone know the purpose of the meeting so they can come prepared for the discussion. There are a few critical ground rules for an effective AAR that everyone needs to agree on and leaders should take an extra effort to model. One, get everyone involved. Everyone who is contributing should have an opportunity to reflect and contribute to the discussion. This conversation isn't productive if everyone from the most junior person to the most senior executive doesn't have a seat at the table. To that point, if you have varying levels of seniority in the room, you may need to find ways to, number two, encourage honest discussion. There may be cultural, personality, or rank-related reasons people on the team don't feel comfortable speaking up. And this brings me to number three. Dismantle hierarchies and ignoring. The people who are on the ground doing the work may have invaluable insights on how aspects of the project are getting done. Without making them comfortable speaking up, you risk missing out on important information that can change your work outcomes. And finally, number four. Establish a positive environment. This isn't the time for blaming or shaming people on the team. It's okay to speak about what did or didn't happen as planned, but it's important that the tone of the conversation remains productive. Now that you've established the ground rules, here are the questions for your AAR. If you have a really large group or are conducting this meeting virtually, break your team into smaller groups so that everyone is engaged in the discussion and then reconvene after everyone's had a chance to share their ideas. Number one. What was supposed to happen? This seems like an obvious question. If everyone isn't in alignment on this question, you want to revisit the team's goals and expectations next time. Two, what did happen? Did we meet our goal and only our goal? Or were there unexpected outcomes, either positive or negative, that also came along with accomplishing our goal? Three, what worked well and why? What did we do a good job with and why did it work so well? It's important to understand why we've been so successful. Four, what do we need to change and why? It's also important to know what didn't go as planned and have a good understanding for why things got derailed. Five, how can we improve our process going forward? A thoughtful discussion about what we can do better in the future gives your team a revised roadmap on your path forward. It's important to get in the habit of doing these, even when things are going well. Learning from successes and failures is how we constantly grow as teams.



Self-Check Quiz – 2.3.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1:

When should collaborative expectations be set?

- A after finishing the project
- B just before the project deadline
- C when formulating the team charter

Question-2

All of these statements about team accountability are true EXCEPT:

- A Consequences should always be punitive.
- B It's important for team members to understand why a task is important.
- C Team members should agree on the consequences for failing to meet group expectations.

Question-3:

Which of these is NOT part of the LESCANT acronym?

- A Language
- B Social organization
- C Trade offs
- D Authority



Answer Key – 2.3.1

Answer-1:

- C These expectations must be established in the team charter, which in turn is established before a project is started.

Answer-2:

- A Consequences should always be punitive.

Answer-3:

- C Trade offs



Learning Outcome 2.4 - Manage stress and conflict

Contents:



HOW TO MANAGE: Contact Center Stress

MANAGING TEAM CONFLICT: Reduce Mistrust and Ambiguity

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES: Identify & Apply Conflict Behaviors



Assessment Criteria:

1. Techniques to handle stress in the Contact Center is explained.
2. Customer interaction is monitored and sentiment is analyzed.
3. Causes of ambiguity and conflicts are identified.
4. Five (5) type of Thomas-Kilmann conflict management style are analyzed.
5. Steps of conflict redressing techniques are determined and applied.



Resources Required:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Workplace (actual or simulated).
- Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.
- Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activities – 2.4

Learning Activities	Resources/Special instructions/References
2.4 Manage stress and conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet: 2.4.1 • Self-Check quiz: 2.4.1 • Answer key: 2.4.1



Information Sheet 2.4.1

Learning Objectives: You will be able to apply several effective ways to deal with Contact center stress.

HOW TO MANAGE: Contact Center Stress

Content Summary:

What is Contact Center Stress?

Common Contact Center Stressors

7 Techniques to Handle Stress in the Contact Center

1. Make Sure Your Agents Are Properly Trained for the Role.
2. Encourage Your Agents to Be Themselves
3. Connect Contact centers to a Real Person as Fast as Possible
4. Be Careful with Targets and Measures
5. Encourage and Reward Your Agents
6. Keep in Touch with Your Agents
7. Give Your Agents the Support They Need

Conflict Management Techniques: Identify & Apply Conflict Behaviors

Thomas-Kilmann conflict management styles

- Avoiding
- Accommodating.
- Competing
- Compromising
- Collaborating

6 Steps Techniques: Resolving Conflict In Your Team

1. Be a listening ear and gain insight into the cause of the situation
2. Ask questions to sow the seeds of understanding
3. Step back and see whether the situation starts to change
4. Encourage each side to talk and listen
5. Chair a meeting and discuss possible solutions
6. Warn agents that the next step involves upper management

Contact center work can be demanding, especially for a customer service agent. They have to handle several Contacts, resolve customer issues, meet targets, and more — while ensuring high customer satisfaction levels. This can create stressful situations, which negatively impact agent productivity.

Fortunately, there are several effective ways to deal with Contact center stress.

In this section, we'll cover what Contact center stress is and six common stressors. We'll then highlight 6 excellent tips to help you manage stress in Contact center agents.

Did you know that that approximately 80% of what we perceive or experience is based upon our physical environment? (Sherry Burton Ways). Managing a Contact center is a stressful job, as is sitting in the chairs making and receiving Contacts all day. The pressure is unlikely to go away – customers need to talk to you, when they need to, and they expect their issues to be solved with little delay. Retaining customers is pretty important if you'd like to stay in business. You may not be able to reduce your team's targets, but one thing you can do is create a Contact center environment that eases stress. Here are 3 easy(ish) ways to do this, today, to hopefully make tomorrow easier.

What is Contact Center Stress?

Contact center stress is the result of factors in the work environment that pressure agents. The intensity of stress in the Contact center industry can vary depending on whether the agent handles outgoing or incoming Contacts.

How? Usually, outbound sales Contacts can create a more stressful, target-driven environment because agents focus on converting potentially disinterested people. But inbound Contacts can be equally stressful as the agent must try their best to retain a dissatisfied customer by solving their issues.

Similarly, agents working in demanding industries like healthcare or tech must comply with rigorous training standards and the high cost of non-compliance.

This can negatively impact agents' mental health, causing anxiety, anger issues, and insomnia.

High stress levels can also reduce agent productivity, cause absenteeism, and decrease employee retention rate. But most importantly, it can lead to agent burnout.

What's Contact center burnout?

Burnout is the feeling of exhaustion or lack of energy, negativity related to the workplace, and reduced efficiency. Contact center employees may suffer from burnout when they experience continuous stress over long periods.

Moreover, according to the World Economic Forum, burnout can also lead to a monetary loss of [\\$322 billion](#) annually. That's why it's necessary to identify what can cause Contact center burnout and take appropriate measures to control it.

6 Common Contact Center Stressors

There are several sources of stress in Contact center agents. Let's look at a few of the most common stressors:

1. Unclear Job Expectation

Your agents might find it difficult to work if they aren't aware of their job responsibilities and duties. They may feel confused about attempting certain tasks, which can be demotivating and cause them to doubt their abilities. This can lead to stress.

2. Intrusive Monitoring

Contact monitoring lets you gather critical performance and quality data. However, if done improperly, it can cause stress. Your agents might find it too demanding, and the fear of doing something wrong can be overwhelming. In addition, it can lead to anxiety, depression, and reduced job satisfaction — which, in turn, can increase turnover rate.

3. Improper Management

An abundance of rules and regulations can cause confusion rather than prevent it. Moreover, it can create an environment that values obedience over originality. Contact center agents may find their job highly inflexible if you ask them to:

- Follow the Contact center script strictly.
- Take fewer breaks.
- Meet ambitious sales targets.
- Undergo rigorous training.

This could mean that they have very little freedom at work, which can eventually cause chronic stress or even employee burnout.

4. Not Realizing the Importance of Their Work

Most Contact center agents fail to recognize the importance of their work in an organization's success. They don't realize their role and the value of their job, which can lead to low self-esteem. If the agent feels like a mere cog in the system, they'll be demotivated to put their best foot forward. All of this can lead to Contact center stress.

5. Too Much Workload

Providing customer support or cold Contacting is a stressful job that can keep an agent mentally occupied, even during breaks. Handling high Contact volumes and difficult customers while meeting goals can be tiring and stressful.

6. Unsuitable Work Environment

The lack of proper resources like a good computer system, ergonomic office chairs, etc., can cause physical discomfort and mental stress. Such environmental factors can discourage your employees from working, leading to reduced performance rates. Common challenges in the work environment can be:

- Concentrating on computer screens.
- Continuously sitting for long hours.
- Working through night shifts.
- Wearing headsets.

This can lead to exhaustion, back pain, headaches, or even short-sightedness in the long run. The high physical cost of working in the high-pressure setup of a Contact center discourages people from continuing long term.

7 Techniques to Handle Stress in the Contact Center

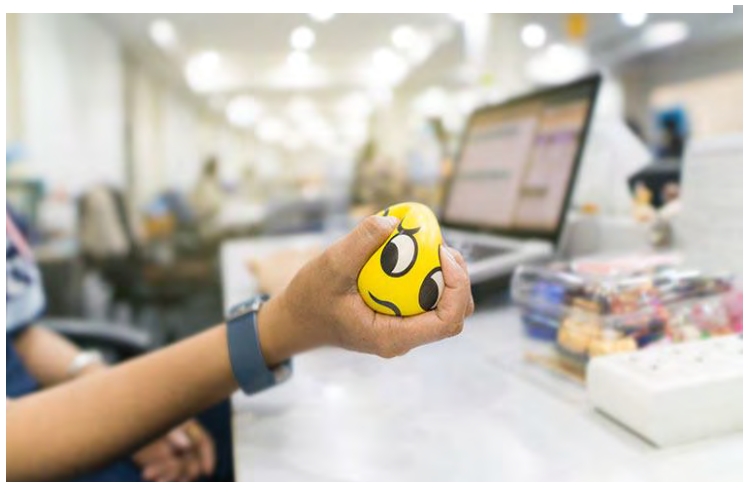
Stress. An ever-present and unwelcome part of modern life, it seems. We may try to live with it and manage it as best as we can, but how much damage is it doing to us and our employees?

The Health and Safety Executive reports that of 38.8 million working days estimated lost due to work-related conditions in the UK in 2019/20, 17.9 million were down to stress, depression or anxiety.

That is nearly 50%. So if you want to address why your advisors are Contacting in sick and leaving you with gaps to fill and longer wait times to answer Contacts, targeting the causes of stress seems to be the obvious place to start.

A contact center can, of course, be a great place to work. But it also has the potential to be a hugely stressful environment. The good news is that many of the factors that may influence the stress experienced by your advisors are becoming, to some extent at least, under your control.

So what can you do to place your advisors under less stress and help them deal with the stress that cannot be avoided? There are several options, many of which need not cost a huge amount to implement, and all of which will have wider positive impacts on your



business and the service that you offer your customers.

Remember, too, that a series of small changes to points of detail can come together to make a much bigger improvement overall.

1. Make Sure Your Agents Are Properly Trained for the Role

This seems obvious, but then many of the best ideas do in retrospect. We have all been in situations we felt ill-equipped to handle. It is not a pleasant experience. Similarly, we have all dealt with people who we quickly determined were unable to help us with our problem, and it is very difficult to avoid becoming frustrated in that situation.

Nobody wants to be unhelpful, especially an advisor in a customer service role. But if they do not have the information that the customer needs or wants, they are helpless. Your advisors need to have all the latest information to deal with what your customers are asking them about.

If you are about to start advertising a new product or service, tell your agents before it goes live. If there is a problem that customers may be contacting about, keep your agents fully briefed on the situation. It hardly inspires confidence in your company when the customers are educating the agents about your new offering, and it will quickly send agent stress soaring – nobody likes to be left looking ignorant.

Make sure that your agents are trained properly and regularly to keep them fully equipped for their jobs. Do not expect them to figure out a new phone or IT system as they go, and if they are moving into a new role, dealing with different customers or products, make sure that they are professionally trained on their new responsibilities.

A well-trained agent will be confident and relaxed, provide better service and be less prone to stress. Similarly, make sure your agents have the proper equipment for the job. If they spend half their time fighting a cranky contact-routing system that is not fit for purpose, they will likely already be stressed before even speaking to the next customer.

Make sure they are comfortable too – anyone gets stressed when they have to spend 7 hours a day in a chair that gives them backache!

2. Encourage Your Agents to Be Themselves

Acting is hard. Ask any performer and they will tell you that they come off stage both pumped with adrenaline and exhausted. If you ask your agents to conform to a rigid corporate persona, you are asking them to put on a performance the whole time they are talking to customers.

This is not good for their stress and mental health, and not good customer service.

That in no way means giving your agents completely free rein – you have company values, expectations, key messages and so on. But let your agents put these across in their own way. People like talking to other people with individual personalities, not people pretending to be a machine.

Let your agents be themselves and they will serve your customers better while getting less tired and stressed in the process.

3. Connect Contact centers to a Real Person as Fast as Possible

Angry customers are stressful for your agents to deal with. There is no getting around that, and it is part of the job. Customers that have already been hanging on the phone for several minutes before they can even speak to somebody may already be well on the way to being angry, regardless of their reason for contacting.

Delays in answering contacts are also inevitable from time to time – things happen that are outside your control, leading to a sudden spike in contacts. But do you really need to make your customers wait several minutes while listening to recorded messages that may not be relevant to them, even when there are agents waiting for contacts?

Of course, those messages serve a purpose and are unavoidable at times. Of course, it makes sense to get customers connected to the right department as fast as possible. But can you improve your system?

Is there a way of fast-tracking Contact centers who are just not going to be able to get what they want from a recorded message or an automated service to an agent? Do that and you will have happier customers and less stressed agents.

4. Be Careful with Targets and Measures

Anyone with a target to hit is likely to feel some pressure, and pressure leads to stress.

Agents are often encouraged to get through as many Contacts as they can to meet average Contact handling time targets. But what this may mean is that agents are pressured to finish Contacts quickly rather than properly addressing the customer's problem, leading to both increased agent stress and poor service. Targets around sales and schedules can have similar impacts.

A good alternative is to base targets around the result of the Contact – is the problem solved and the customer satisfied? Targets like this will reduce stress and encourage agents to do everything they can to help rather than just get off the Contact as quickly as possible.

5. Encourage and Reward Your Agents

It is not enough to just value your agents highly – you have to tell them and show them that you do. Regularly show and tell your agents that you value them and their work, and, if you can, have a recognition and reward scheme for agents that provide exceptional service.

A few personal words of encouragement to individuals and small groups can also work wonders – most people simply like to know that what they do is recognized and valued.

6. Keep in Touch with Your Agents

While you are encouraging your agents, make sure to take time to listen to them too. They will hear the problems that customers are having first-hand and may well be in the best position to suggest possible solutions, even if it goes beyond the scope of their role. Sometimes you can achieve a great deal just by listening.

Everyone needs to vent occasionally, and just the process of telling a manager about the issues they face can be a valuable stress-reduction mechanism. Of course, you should also follow up the conversation and take practical steps to address the problems raised if you can.

7. Give Your Agents the Support They Need

Support can take many forms, some of which have been touched on in previous points. There are two additional areas to flag here.

Firstly, consider how easy it is for your agents to escalate difficult Contacts. Of course you don't want every unhappy customer passed to a supervisor, but your agents do need to feel that there is backup there when they need it for those really difficult Contacts.

Stress will likely go through the roof if a customer is getting angry and the agent knows that there is absolutely nobody else to turn to. Often speaking to a different person can calm the Contacter down in and of itself.

Secondly, have support services in place for when your agents do struggle. Everyone goes through good and bad times, and these can be triggered by events both in and out of work. Consider what you can offer in terms of counselling and other staff welfare services.

These will again help to make your agents see that they really are valued, and hopefully get your people through those tough times faster and with less angst.

Final Thought

The benefits of less stressed agents go way beyond reducing your absence rates. If the person who answers your Contact immediately sounds happy and calm, you instinctively warm to them.

Even if you are phoning to make a complaint, a happy voice that sounds eager to help on the other end of the phone immediately starts to dilute your anger.

As Richard Branson said, "if you look after your staff well, they will look after your customers." Destressing your agents is a win all round.

If you look after your staff well, they will look after your customers.

Stress will not go away if you ignore it, but by managing it and taking steps to reduce the causes of stress and help agents to deal with it when it does occur, a few small changes can make a big difference. That is good for your agents and good for your business.

Conflict Management Techniques: Identify & Apply Conflict Behaviors

Team conflict. What do you feel now when I say those words? I hope you feel more confident in your ability to manage conflict well. I hope you're inspired to be part of and lead teams that help people work together to achieve goals productively and trust one another even in challenging circumstances. Remember, the difference between a healthy and a dysfunctional team starts with you. When you decide to help your team manage conflict in a healthy way and practice the skillsets we learned, you grow your influence, your impact in your team, and in your organization. My takeaway from leading teams in Fortune 500 companies is that leaders who are great at managing teams get tapped for the best opportunities. Our world is going through tremendous change and ambiguity. Industries and companies are rapidly being transformed through technology and globalization. Our world needs leaders like you, you who care deeply about making a difference. No difference can be made on your own. It has to be by harnessing the talent and engagement of others. And, it has to start with you taking personal accountability for helping your team become both productive and fun. I wish you tremendous luck in bringing this learning to your workplace. Remember, practicing what you've learned is the most important thing. Please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn so you can share your stories. Thank you for letting me share what I care about with you so that together we can help create workplaces that positively impact and transform our people and our world.

Thomas-Kilmann conflict management styles

Think about your last conflict situation. Did you carefully decide how you were going to handle it? Or did your instinct kick in? If you're like me I often default to a certain style of handling conflict. Most of us don't hit that pause button, and say to ourselves hey what's the right way to handle this particular conflict? We get swept up by our default emotions or our reactions. But friends, there is a reason we want to hit the pause button. It's so that we can become better at leading, and managing different conflict situations. To help us become more self-aware of our own default style there is a model of conflict management called **Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument**. This model has two dimensions of handling conflict cooperative and assertive. Based on how much we use cooperation, and assertiveness the model maps out five different conflict management styles. Let's briefly look at each of these.

The first one is **avoiding**. In this style of managing conflicts, you're neither highly cooperative nor highly assertive. You avoid the issue altogether. This may work in a situation that is emotionally intense or charged, and it's best not to engage immediately.

The second style is **accommodating**. In this style of managing conflict you're high on cooperation, but low on asserting. You prioritize others' needs ahead of yours. This may work when your position is not as important to you as theirs is to them, or you may not have as much expertise in the situation.

On the other end of the spectrum from this is a style called **competing**. In this approach you put your own needs, or point of view, above that of others. You may have unique expertise, or the issue is of critical importance to you.

The fourth style is **compromising**. This is where both assertiveness, and cooperation are happening in moderation, and each side is giving up some of what they want in order to reach a solution. It may be used when both parties are looking for a quick solution.

The fifth style is **collaborating**. In this scenario people involved in the conflict are bringing both high assertiveness, and high cooperation skillsets. This creates optimum solutions, but it can take strong skillsets, trust, and more time and effort.

Think about these different styles of conflict resolution. Do you see which styles you tend to prefer, and which you tend to avoid? When we only use one or two styles it prevents us from being effective in multiple types of conflict situations. That's because different styles of conflict management will be more or less effective in different conflicts.

To lead effectively in different conflicts we indeed need to be able to push that pause button, and choose a conflict management style that will best serve this situation. My goal is to help you learn how to be agile in multiple ways of managing conflict so you can be more effective in different conflict situations. And this, my friends, means that you need to become prescient to what a conflict situation needs. It also requires skill development in each style. A tool that may be helpful to you is the five conflict

styles worksheet. Think back to a conflict situation you're dealing with right now. You can use this exercise file to determine which style of conflict management will be most appropriate in this situation.

6 Steps Techniques: Resolving Conflict In Your Team

Heather Foley looks at the steps a team leader should take to resolve conflict between agents. All agents should be encouraged to challenge ideas, even if this does result in some conflict. However, there comes a point when conflict can become dangerous and is no longer constructive.

Here are some ideas to help you restore peace and morale in the contact center battlefield.

1. Be a listening ear and gain insight into the cause of the situation

At the early stages of any conflict, you need to be prepared to listen. Try not to judge or take sides too early.

Listen to everything said by everyone, don't share information or gossip, just allow both sides to unburden themselves.

This will achieve two things. It will give you an insight into the cause of the situation, and it will position you as someone who is impartial and trustworthy.

Remaining in this position for too long can be dangerous, but it's certainly the right place to start.

2. Ask questions to sow the seeds of understanding

Having fully understood the situation, and earned a neutral position, you now need to ask questions.

Good questions, asked sensitively, can help to sow the seeds of understanding in a conflict, and perhaps instil some appreciation of the other party's position. Questions need to be asked gently, and in an unbiased way. If done well, the results can be significant.

3. Step back and see whether the situation starts to change

This is now a good time to step back and see whether the situation starts to change and relations thaw.

If they do, you may want to consider continuing observation for a while longer. If they don't, it might be worth trying to intervene again.

4. Encourage each side to talk and listen

If you think intervention is required, you should limit it to encouraging each side to talk and listen.

Don't become a spokesperson or a go-between, but do reassure each side that if they speak openly, a mutually agreeable resolution can be found.

5. Chair a meeting and discuss possible solutions

If asked, and if you feel skilled enough, you can chair a meeting. In this situation, you need to be utterly impartial (regardless of your personal views) and follow a clear agenda.

The agenda should be structured to allow each side to express their views whilst the other listens without interrupting.

Both sides then need to propose solutions. Usually, a fair solution will appear and both sides will become reasonable again.

6. Warn agents that the next step involves upper management

As a last resort, simply remind them that this issue has to be resolved, otherwise upper management will inevitably become involved.

This would result in the worst outcome possible for both sides, as the upper management team will likely be annoyed at the lack of productivity throughout this saga!

This should focus the conflicted parties' minds on being sensible and agreeing to the best solution!

Conflict is not only a part of business, it's also a part of real life, and a necessary one.

While dealing with conflict won't necessarily be a pleasant time for you, if handled well, it could be an unusual path to building your reputation for the future.



Self-Check Quiz – 2.4.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: Which are 6 Common Contact Center Stressors?

Question-2: Which 7 Techniques to Handle Stress in the Contact Center?

Question-3: Which are the 5 Thomas-Kilmann conflict management styles?

Question-4: Which 6 Steps Techniques that Resolving Conflict in Your Team?



Answer Key – 2.4.1

Answer-1: 6 Common Contact Center Stressors are:

1. Unclear Job Expectation
2. Intrusive Monitoring
3. Improper Management
4. Not Realizing the Importance of Their Work
5. Too Much Workload
6. Unsuitable Work Environment

Answer-2: 7 Techniques to Handle Stress in the Contact Center are as follows:

1. Make Sure Your Agents Are Properly Trained for the Role.
2. Encourage Your Agents to Be Themselves
3. Connect Contact centers to a Real Person as Fast as Possible
4. Be Careful with Targets and Measures
5. Encourage and Reward Your Agents
6. Keep in Touch with Your Agents
7. Give Your Agents the Support They Need

Answer-3: Thomas-Kilmann conflict management styles are:

Avoiding
Accommodating.
Competing
Compromising
Collaborating

Answer-4: 6 Steps Techniques: Resolving Conflict in Your Team

1. Be a listening ear and gain insight into the cause of the situation
2. Ask questions to sow the seeds of understanding
3. Step back and see whether the situation starts to change
4. Encourage each side to talk and listen
5. Chair a meeting and discuss possible solutions
6. Warn agents that the next step involves upper management



Learning Outcome 2.5 - Retain the talent



Contents:

THEORIES of MOTIVATION: Why It Matters?

CONTACT CENTER MOTIVATION: Productivity and Staff Retention

WHAT TO MONITOR AND HOW: 3A (Absenteeism- Adherence – Attrition) in Customer Service.

HOW TO MOTIVATE A TEAM: Strategies-Engagement-Gamification

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE: Reward-Empower-Inspire.

A GREAT COMPANY CULTURE: Creating a Motivational Environment



Assessment Criteria:

1. Seven (7) Strategies are identified to increase staff motivation.
2. Absenteeism is calculated and managed.
3. Attrition rate is calculated and reduced.
4. Scheduled adherence is calculated and improved.
5. Three (3) keys to engaging employees are applied for motivating team members.
6. Team members are rewarded and inspired with incentive.
7. Games to liven up the team are performed.



Resources Required:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Workplace (actual or simulated).
- Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.
- Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activities – 2.5

Learning Activities	Resources/Special instructions/References
2.5 Retain the talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet: 2.5.1 – 2.5.5 • Self-Check quiz: 2.5.1 – 2.5.5 • Answer key: 2.5.1 – 2.5.5



Information Sheet 2.5.1

Learning Objectives: You will be able to keep the maximize your team's productivity, focusing on the operational factors of the contact center and how to motivate people may be the key to your need.

CONTACT CENTER MOTIVATION: what to monitor and how

Content Summary:

Motivation, Productivity, and Staff Retention

What To Monitor and How: 3A (Absenteeism- Adherence – Attrition) in Customer Service.

What Is Absenteeism?

What Drives Absenteeism?

How to Managed (Reduce) Absenteeism

Defining Adherence

The Impact of Low Adherence

How to Manage and Improve Schedule Adherence

What Is Attrition Rate

Why Is Attrition Becoming an Increasing Problem?

The Top Five Ways to Reduce Attrition Issues

1. Skills Development
2. Communication
3. Promotion/Progress
4. Management Style
5. Work–Life Balance

Creating a high performing contact center doesn't just happen overnight. It comes as a result of creating the right environment for your contact center agents, through a number of tools and tactics.

Your agents are the heart and soul of the business, acting as the dominant interface between the company and the consumer. The image they project to the customer is a critical one. It only makes sense to take care of your staff. If you're struggling with contact center performance, or are keen to maximize your team's productivity, focusing on the following factors of how to motivate people may be just the key you need.



Motivation, Productivity and Staff Retention

When a team member isn't motivated, they aren't likely to be productive, and when they aren't productive, it's hard to meet the challenging targets you may be tasked to achieve. Let's take a closer look at the connection between motivation, productivity, and staff retention to help you see where you can make changes to improve all three.

Motivation, Productivity, and Staff Retention

Working in a contact center can be challenging, so motivation is a huge factor in its success. The Same is true for any team's success, whether in business or sport.

Motivated teams are likely to stay longer, be productive, give great customer service, go the 'extra mile', all while being happy and engaged. Which, if you've ever worked in this environment, you'll know is a lot easier said than done!

Motivation isn't something you learn once. You don't just read a book and suddenly you are highly motivated and able to motivate other people. So, how does it work?

MOTIVATION

Your team may be motivated by any number of things, but most obviously, it's their salary and bonuses at the end of the day.

For most agents, the reward isn't the achieving of targets or the results the company achieves, but the money and other benefits they get put in theirs as a result of their work. And yet there is something else to be considered when it comes to keeping your team motivated.

Recent Gallup polls show only 24% of employees are engaged in their daily work, yet that high engagement translates to 22% higher productivity.

This means it's important to talk to your staff. They're the best source of information about what you can do better as a company. Ask for feedback about company policies, and really listen. While you may not feasibly be able to implement all of their suggestions, there may be a common theme you can take action on that will help boost motivation.

PRODUCTIVITY

Motivation helps fuel productivity, but highly motivated agents can't be immediately productive in a vacuum. To be productive, your agents must have access to the tools and training they need to be successful.

This starts with having clear and defined processes specific to your company, and ensuring you have a clear induction program for all agents that covers these processes and your company culture even if they have previous experience in outbound contact center s. Keep the training focused and up to date, so skills stay sharp.

Define metrics of success ahead of time, so employees know what to expect. Whether it is the number of outbound calls made, the sales made the length of time on the call, or other details, ensuring your employees know what you expect of them keeps them focused and on track.

Your middle performers are producing an average of 1,300 productivity units per month, so 60% of your company is giving you 60% of your performance. The top 20% on the other hand, produce about 33% of your performance, and the bottom 15%? They're responsible for about 7% of your performance. You'll get the best ROI if you motivate the middle and improve their skills.

STAFF (AGENT) RETENTION

When you have motivated and productive agents, they're much more likely to stick around. Retention is a large piece of the puzzle simply because turnover can be costly.

Estimates range from at least the cost of the employee's annual salary, to an average of 2.5 times the annual salary, due to factors including low productivity during new agent training, the cost of recruitment and potential overtime from other team members filling the gap.

Research from PriceWaterhouse Coopers shows that nearly one in four employees leave their jobs before they've been employed with a company for a year, and this figure is even higher for the contact center industry in Australia where turnover can be as high as 40%. As a whole, employee turnover costs

Australia about \$3.8 billion in lost productivity, and additional \$385 million in recruitment costs that could have been avoided.

As managers and leaders of contact centers, we can play a big part in creating the right structure and culture to foster a motivated workforce. How we lay down the foundations for a motivated team differs between regions, countries, sales, tech support, night shifts, market sector etc., but the principles remain the same.

The motivational approach to job in Contact Center

The motivational approach to job design considers the characteristics of a job that affect motivation, satisfaction, engagement, absenteeism, and turnover.

When we covered organizational structure of contact center, you learned that the way characteristics of a job are organized can act to increase or decrease effort (job characteristics model). Building on that model, you will learn how job rotation, job enlargement, and job enrichment can have a major impact on motivation.

The following approaches, if we are applying for contact center job, increase the motivation for the success any team:

WHAT TO MONITOR AND HOW: 3A (Absenteeism- Adherence – Attrition) in Customer Service.

HOW TO MOTIVATE A TEAM: Strategies-Engagement-Gamification.

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE: Reward-Empower - Inspire.

In this section, we discuss the details on first approach, and remaining two approaches we will discuss on next two information sheets accordingly.

WHAT TO MONITOR AND HOW: 3A (Absenteeism- Adherence – Attrition)

Like Agent **Absence (A)**, dealing with **Adherence (A)** and **Attrition (A)**, These 3A of Job Characteristics of Customer Services that Affect Motivation on agents and these issues can also be a real pain for contact center leaders.

What Is Absenteeism?

Absenteeism is the percentage of unauthorized time that members of the contact center team are absent from the floor. It is also known as “absence rate”.

Included under the umbrella term of absenteeism are things like:

- Authorized and unauthorized sick leave (physical and mental health)
- Lateness due to a variety of reasons (e.g. transport issues, home emergencies)
- Unexplained leave / Suspect absences
- Appointments (doctor, dentist, lawyer, etc.)
- Family / Childcare emergency

However, do remember that things like paid holiday and jury duty shouldn't be considered as absenteeism.

Calculate Absenteeism – the Formula

The Absenteeism Formula

Typically, absenteeism is calculated on a yearly basis in contact centers, using the formula below:

$$\text{Absenteeism Rate} = \frac{\text{(Average \# of Employees X Missed Workdays)}}{\text{(Average \# of Employees X Total Workdays)}}$$

However, there are a number of variations to this formula, to calculate different types of absenteeism, the cost of absenteeism and more.

The trouble with measuring general absenteeism using the formula above is that it doesn't provide you with a great deal of insight, other than a percentage figure. Not only does it lack insight, but the percentage figure can be misleading. This is because, while the absenteeism percentage may seem stable, the number of long-term absences could be decreasing and the number of absent employees may be on the rise.

Generally, short-term absenteeism is when an agent takes up to five consecutive days off from work. Anything more would be considered long-term absenteeism.

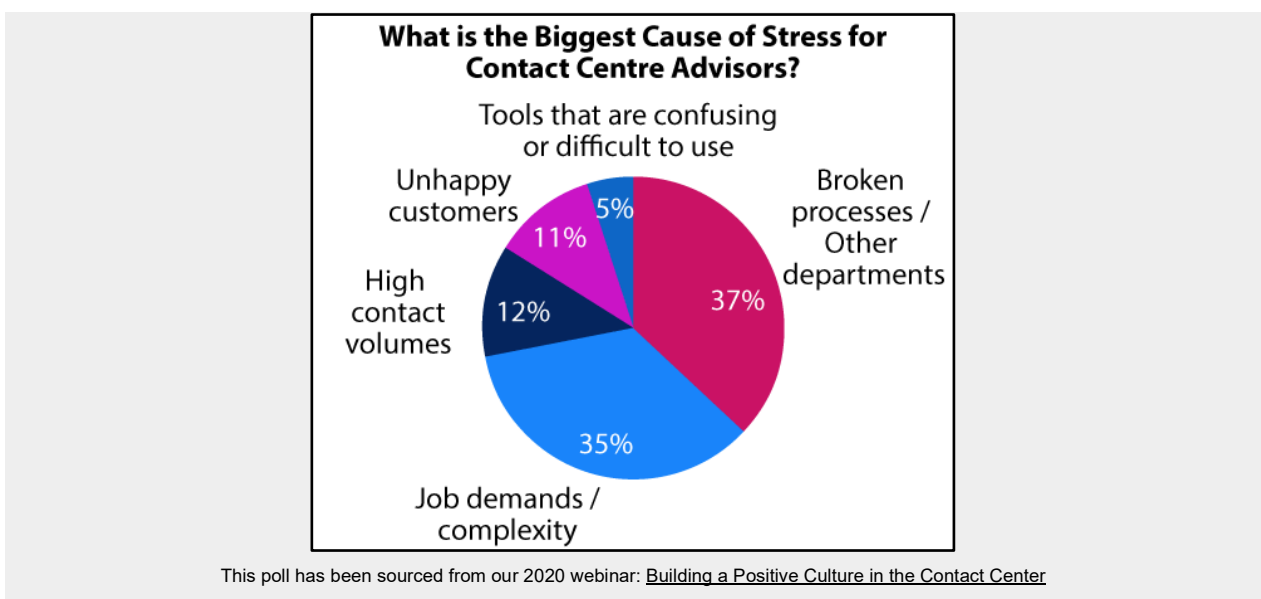
Include all the hours that agents were absent for a spell of time that was fewer than five consecutive shifts in one equation. Then, include all the hours that agents were absent for a spell of time that was more than five consecutive shifts in another. By having two separate percentages, you can then separately assess any long-term absences and whether short-term absences are becoming an increasing or decreasing issue. This helps to remove the ambiguity from the overall percentage and gives you more insight into the underlying causes of your contact center's absenteeism.

For Practical Example pls see the **Job sheet 20: How to calculate Absenteeism.**

What Drives Absenteeism?

There a number of reasons why contact centers suffer from higher-than-average absenteeism rates. Five key reasons include:

1. **Schedule dissatisfaction** – Perhaps the team have to work occasional weekends, despite some really disliking having to do so. Or an agent can't find a shift-swap, so they have to miss a key family event. Time off and shift patterns are a constant source of frustration in some contact centers.
2. **Lack of follow-up** – An agent may have taken a chance and taken a day off once, and observed that there was no detailed follow-up as to why they were away. So, this one-off might develop into a routine, whereby every once in a while, the agent will decide to take a day off.
3. **Culture** – If people don't like coming to work, they are less likely to come in. So, it is worth taking the time to invest in a positive **culture**, where fun is built in – perhaps through motivational games, charity fundraisers and afternoon pick-me-ups.
4. **Stress** – There are **several** sources of stress in the contact center, including fire-fighting high contact volumes, job complexity and unhappy customers, which can lead to high levels of stress. But it's broken processes that cause the most stress, according to our poll, and heighten absenteeism.



5. **Team Leaders** – There is the argument that bad team leaders stem from a bad organizational culture, which is often the case, but any team leader should be given the following messages:

- Be prepared to have difficult conversations

- Treat each member of the team as equal
- Create a team feedback loop
- Get to know your agents personally

If the team leader ignores any of these four messages, absenteeism could well spike.

How to Managed (Reduce) Absenteeism

However, Experts believes the key is in good culture, saying: “Get to know your people, and understand their strengths and weaknesses.”

“Put good communication processes in line and make moves to build a positive culture, which encourages agents to come into work every day.”

“In engaging with customers, people are often the most important asset that an organization has. As with all assets, it is important to manage the availability and quality of people, with absence management being a key component.”

In terms of building good lines of communication, here are four quick tips that may help you on your way:

- **Duvet days and shift-swapping** – A lot of absenteeism is caused by schedule dissatisfaction. This highlights the value of shift-swapping and duvet days. If you give the team a certain number of duvet days each year – which can be taken at short notice, without explanation – it will provide them with valued, extra flexibility.
- **Start-up an online community page** – This allows the team to communicate freely with each other. It can also be used for recognizing agent achievements, swapping shifts and much more.
- **Implement an open-door policy** – An open-door policy is for managers and team leaders to encourage agents to come to them with any problems or requests. HomeServe’s contact center in Walsall have taken this one step further, as managers work in “pods” on the contact center floor, just like agents.
- **Create a “go out and speak to somebody new rule”** – This is a rule that is currently in place at Vax’s contact center in Droitwich. Since being implemented, every member of the senior team has to start a conversation with someone they don’t normally speak to, in an effort to boost team cohesion.

These four tips help to build team spirit and reinforce to agents that there is somebody to talk to if something is wrong. This is a key to helping to reduce those percentages of absenteeism that we calculated earlier.

Schedule Adherence

In this section we are going to look at the importance of schedule adherence in the contact center, and how to create a reliable schedule adherence figure.

Defining Adherence

One of the first issues to face when understanding schedule adherence is that there are a number of different terms that are used interchangeably. We give you the meaning of schedule adherence as well as the other terms which are often confused:

1. Adherence

The amount of time an agent worked which aligned with the time they were scheduled to work. This includes call time, after call wrap, and scheduled activities like meetings and training.

2. Conformance

The total amount of time an agent was scheduled to work, versus the amount of time they actually worked.

3. Compliance

Often confused with adherence, this usually refers to compliance with in-house or regulatory requirements, like PCI DSS.

4. Occupancy

The amount of time that agents spend on call handling activities as a proportion of total available time. Unlike adherence and conformance, this measure is usually only applied at the macro level rather than for individual agents.

5. Utilization

The amount of time that agents spend on call handling activities as a proportion of total scheduled hours. This is also generally applied at the macro level.

Adherence Calculation

Adherence rate is a percentage. Here's what you need to do to calculate contact center schedule adherence:

$$\text{Adherence Rate} = 100 \times (\text{Total scheduled time} - \text{Time off schedule}) / \text{Total scheduled time}$$

For Practical Example pls see the **Job sheet 21: How to calculate Adherence Rate.**

How does Schedule Adherence Differ from Conformance?

Here, we are looking at schedule adherence, and by extension, conformance. Broadly, they are both measures of how well an agent is sticking to their schedule, and they are both worth measuring.

Schedule Adherence

Schedule adherence is the percentage of the agent's scheduled working day when they are present at work. This includes all internal shrinkage activities. For further clarification, here's an equation for contact center adherence:

$$\text{Schedule Adherence (\%)} = \frac{\text{Minutes in Adherence}}{\text{Total Scheduled Minutes}} \times 100$$

So, if an agent was supposed to work from 8am to 9am, but instead worked from 8.05am to 9.05am, their schedule adherence rate was 91.6%.

This is because they were present for 55 of their scheduled 60 minutes. The additional five minutes they worked was "out of adherence".

Conformance

Conformance is a percentage measure of the amount of time that an agent spends at work, versus the amount of time that they were scheduled to work.

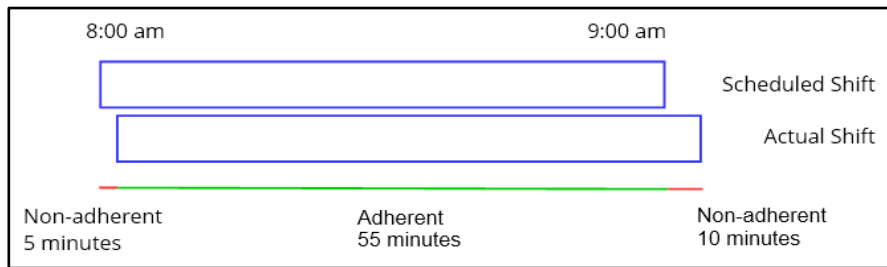
The formula for conformance looks like this:

$$\text{Conformance (\%)} = \frac{\text{Actual Work Time}}{\text{Schedule Work Time}} \times 100$$

So, using the example above, if an agent was supposed to work from 8am to 9am, but instead worked from 8.05am to 9.05am, their conformance rate was 100%. This is because they were present at work for the exact same number of minutes they were supposed to be.

It is especially important to consider adherence and not just conformance, as adherence looks at whether you are supporting the business when you should be, at the right times.

Let's take a closer look at the difference, with an agent's adherence and conformance over a single hour. The agent is supposed to work for the full hour, which is 8:00 until 9:00am. However, they don't actually start until 8:05, and compensate by working until 9:10. Are they conformant and/or adherent?



Conformance looks at the total amount of time the agent worked (65 minutes) and divides that by the total amount of time they were scheduled to work (60 minutes), expressing the result as a percentage.

$$\text{Conformance} = \frac{\text{Working Minutes}}{\text{Scheduled Minutes}} \times 100$$

An example of the conformance formula would be:

$$108.3 = \frac{65}{60} \times 100$$

In this example, we can see that not only is the agent conformant, their conformance is over 100% because they worked longer than their shift. But what about their adherence? For this, we first need to know how many of their scheduled minutes they worked. In this case it is 55 minutes.

In most contact centers that use a modern WFM system, schedule adherence will be automatically calculated at specific intervals. Without this resource, contact centers can calculate adherence themselves, usually by using data from their ACD.

The Impact of Low Adherence

Most contact centers put a lot of time and effort into forecasting and scheduling, but that doesn't achieve anything if agents don't adhere to the schedule.

The impact that this can have on KPIs isn't always clear to agents, or even to planners. There is a tendency to believe that so long as the correct number of hours are worked in total, it doesn't matter if they align exactly with the schedule.

While it's true that the impact of one person starting a few minutes late on one occasion will usually be small, there can be major consequences if this habit is widespread. If we consider a hypothetical contact center, receiving 400 calls over thirty minutes (with an AHT of 240 seconds), we can quickly see the impact of even a few agents failing to adhere to their schedule.

Available Agents	ASA (seconds)	Occupancy (%)
60	9.9	88.8
59	14.5	90.3
58	21.6	91.9
57	33.4	93.5
56	55.3	95.2
55	105.5	96.9

By the time five agents are missing, ASA has gone from around ten seconds to over one and a half minutes, seriously damaging the customer experience. We can also see occupancy rising from a reasonably healthy 88%, to an unsustainable 96%, making life very difficult for the remaining agents.

These figures can also carry a substantial financial implication. Some estimation indicates the annual cost for non-adherence of ten minutes per agent per day is about the same as the agent wage bill for a full week.

This estimation is highly elastic and depends largely on the variability of contact volume for the center. Nonetheless a financial penalty, on top of the staff and customer experience issues, makes a strong case for tight adherence monitoring. The use of technology can help prevent these issues.

How to Manage and Improve Schedule Adherence

Here is a selection of tried-and-tested techniques to enhance schedule adherence rates.

1. **Set adherence grades** – Agents may willingly arrive a few minutes late and still hit their adherence goals. To avoid this, create a grading system that encourages the team to get as close to 100% adherence as possible.
2. **Diagnose reasons for adherence failures** – Classic root causes of poor adherence rates include; Improper consequences, unclear expectations and, long handling times. Discover which is at play and address the issue.
3. **Engage agents in managing adherence** – Explain the importance of schedule adherence to agents. Discuss how it impacts the team as a whole. Then, if a WFM integration is possible, set up proactive adherence notifications on agent desktops.
4. **Discuss adherence reports** – Reflect on historical adherence reports in agent appraisals. Doing so makes the consequences of adherence a certainty. With real-time adherence reporting, the contact center may also make these consequences immediate.

Final Thoughts

The ability to get accurate reports on schedule adherence is key, as if you can't measure schedule adherence, you cannot measure it, while we also want to be sure that adherence statistics cannot be manipulated in any way. Historical adherence and conformance reports from inside your WFM system will be very helpful here and can really fit the bill when it comes to one-to-ones and appraisals.

Why? Because when agents are aware that you have the facts and figures right in front of you, it makes the consequences much more certain. However, a potentially even better strategy to reporting and monitoring adherence can be formulated if you have the capability to monitor schedule adherence in real time.

When you can report on schedule adherence in such a way, you help prevent adherence and scheduling from becoming an isolated area of performance management. Instead, it starts to become part of the business ethos. If you can string each of these seven key parts of managing schedule adherence in the contact center together, you will likely be able to better control and improve this key metric.

What Is Attrition?

Attrition has a wide-ranging impact on the contact center. Customer satisfaction (CSAT) can take a hit in contact centers with high levels of attrition due to missed service levels or inexperienced agents.

What Is Attrition Rate – Definition

Attrition is the rate at which members of staff leave the workforce over a given period of time.

It is also known as “employee turnover”, or “employee churn”, although in the contact center industry, “churn” tends to refer to the flow of customers rather than staff.



Attrition is high in contact centers (particularly in the BPO sector) compared with other industries. A 2016 report by *ContactBabel* found that one in five UK contact centers have an attrition rate of over 30%.

Why Is Attrition Becoming an Increasing Problem?

Why attrition is becoming such a prominent issue for contact centers.

Callers are likely to experience higher average handle times (AHT), more transfers and lower first-call resolution. Supervisors are forced to deal with a greater number of absence- and attendance-related issues, while the business overall is affected by increased costs related to recruitment, onboarding and attrition during onboarding.

Attrition in the contact center is high — 25% to 40% on average — but can reach 100% in some contact centers, such as ones operated by business process outsourcing companies (BPOs).



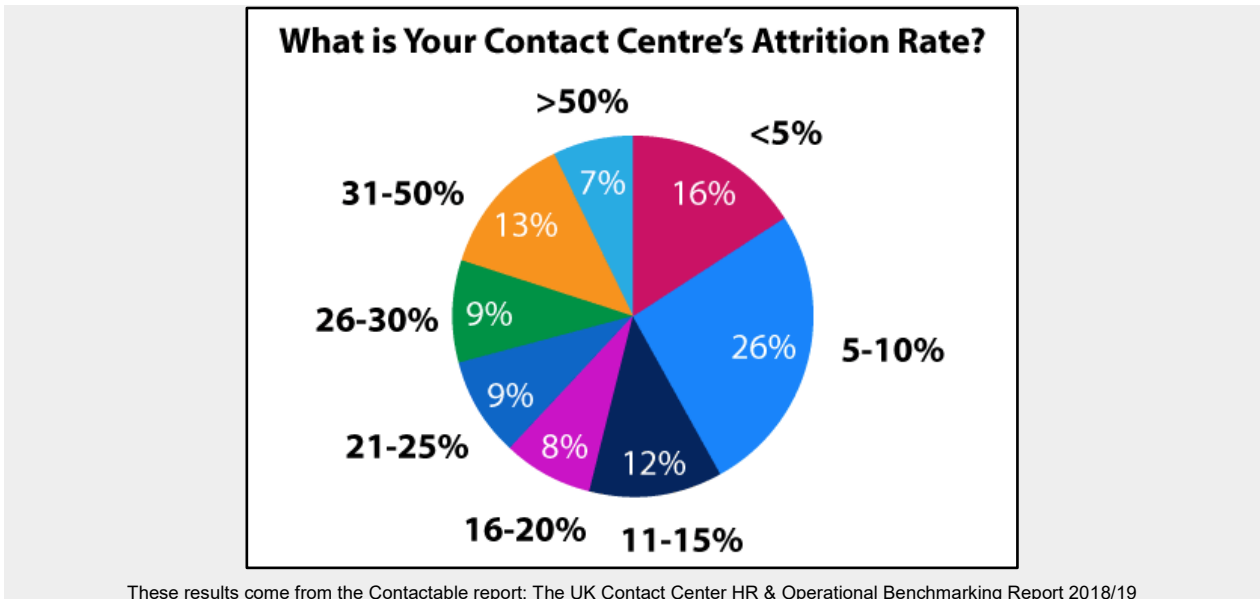
In fact, the 2020 Contact Center Pipeline Survey found that attrition is the No. 1 challenge for contact centers – yet most contact center leaders have no plans to address it.

So why is attrition such a problem? Among the most common reasons for turnover in the contact center are:

- **Inappropriate candidate selection for the role and the culture:** Regardless of industry, survey after survey finds employers complaining about how difficult hiring is. When organizations are unable to identify individuals who will do their job well within their specific organization, attrition skyrockets.
- **Employee disengagement:** Employees who aren't engaged are more likely to leave. One Gallup survey found that organizations whose employees reported high engagement had 25% to 65% less attrition than their peers.
- **Low job satisfaction:** Employee satisfaction is directly linked to attrition, both in the short-term (immediately after hire) and the long-term.
- **Excessive pressure and stress:** Workplace stress in America is estimated at over \$300 billion annually, and some experts estimate that up to 40% of turnover is due to stress.
- **Inflexible working environment:** Employees who are unable to balance their professional and personal lives, including taking time off for doctor's appointments and to care for children, are more likely to search out other, more flexible, employers. In fact, one survey reported by the Society for Human Resource Management found that a majority of employees (78%) said a flexible work arrangement would allow them to live a healthier life, while 86% said they would be less stressed.
- **No career growth or development opportunities:** Global Talent Monitor's report on workforce activity shows that the lack of future career development remains a key driver of employee attrition — 40% of departing employees say it led them to be dissatisfied with their jobs, Gallup reports.

- **Lack of recognition:** More than 65 percent of employees report they don't feel recognized at work, according to Human Resources Today, and this fuels attrition.
- **Abusive calls:** One researcher found that agents can average up to 10 hostile encounters a day, which takes a toll on morale and encourages employees to leave the organization.

On their own, each of these factors has a significant impact on attrition. Together, they magnify the challenge contact centers face in keeping attrition at a manageable level.



In addition, agents seem to leave the industry after a very short period of time. In fact, some studies indicate that half of the agents who leave the profession do so within their first 90 days of employment.

The good news is that by more effectively managing attrition, contact centers can position themselves to meet service levels, provide great customer service and reduce hiring- and onboarding-related costs.

Calculate Attrition Rate – The Formula

The equation for attrition often catches contact center professionals out, although it seems relatively straightforward. To calculate attrition, you need to divide the number of employees that left during the period by the average number of employees for the period, then multiply this figure by 100 to give you the percentage attrition rate.

The attrition rate formula is:

$$\text{Attrition Rate \%} = (\text{No. of Employees that left During period}) \div (\text{Average Number of Employees for period}) \times 100.$$

$$\text{Attrition Rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{No. of Employees That Left During Period}}{\text{Average Number of Employees for Period}} \times 100$$

The part that catches people out is that you must divide the number of employees that left by the “average number of employees for the period” instead of the total number of employees for the period.

The figure can be reached by taking the starting number of employees for the period, adding that to the finishing number of employees for the period, and dividing the result by two. For most, the period is a year.

So, for a company that began a year with 6,500 employees and ended the year with 6,380 employees, the calculation for average employees would be $(6,500+6,380) / 2 = 6,440$.

However, while the period is one year, it doesn't mean that attrition rate is a metric that should be tracked only once a year. Instead, according to Expert, it is better to calculate the metric on a rolling, week-by-week basis.

“The key is to have a moving average trend. So, one week you would calculate the attrition rate for the past 52 weeks and then, in the next week's calculations, the oldest week would drop off and the new one adds on.”

It's all about gaining actionable insight, and attrition rates can be really spiky. So, looking at weeks or even months in isolation may give you a false picture, while longer-term trends will give you much better insight into what caused the attrition, as opposed to just looking at an overall figure at the end of the year.”

For example, a big spike in one week could easily be dismissed as a big push on performance management, whereas a longer trend can give you a better idea of whether there are systemic problems impacting attrition.”

So, by measuring attrition on a weekly basis, you can immediately identify and address what caused a spike. If it was avoidable, the contact center can learn directly from the experience, so it doesn't happen again.

The Top Five Ways to Reduce Attrition Issues

Contact centers are no different from any other business, and with the negative images portrayed by the media, it is perhaps even more important that any issues around attrition management are dealt with.

At The Forum, we believe that a contact center can be a great place to work and our research into attrition shows some of the key areas for improvement.

So, research suggests that the top five ways to improve attrition are:

- 1. Skills Development**
- 2. Communication**
- 3. Promotion/Progress**
- 4. Management Style**
- 5. Work-Life Balance**



But what can you do differently?

1. Skills Development

When we look at attrition and how to improve it we are asking “how can I keep my staff motivated?” If you refer to any motivational theory, personal development is always a high motivator.

So, why would a contact center be any different? Looking for ways to enhance the skills of your employees is good for the business, the customer and the employee.

Many centers use multi-skilling as a way to be more efficient. Used correctly, this can also be seen as a development tool. Employees would be trained in new skills after certain periods of time and/or reaching a certain performance level. If communicated correctly, this gives employees a sense of achievement and creates variety in a job.

This can be achieved without the need for financial reward, resulting in motivated staff, who will stay with the business longer as they move along the skill path, whilst meeting the business need for efficiency.

2. Communication

Communication is key to any successful business! In contact centers there is a need for everyone to understand the goals of the business. It is important that employees feel part of the plan and understand what the business is striving for and the part that they have to play in making it happen.

Attrition rates are high in centers when employees feel disengaged, “nobody listens to me”. There have been a number of good communication examples where employee focus groups are used to make change happen, and employee champions are used to drive change forward and give the employees a voice.

Targets need to be aligned and communicated effectively. Results need to be reported and discussed.

Many centers now have web-based technology to display performance stats and working patterns. The use of intranet sites to display information can also be very effective. We must use all the communication media we have available, and remember that what may not seem important to a manager may be crucial to an agent.

3. Promotion and Progression

Many now view contact center work as a career, and with the varying roles available, from the traditional path of Agent, Coach, Team Leader or a support role in HR, Resource Planning, or Finance, there are many opportunities.

It is important, therefore, that at least some of these vacancies are filled with internal candidates. This gives employees the knowledge that if they work hard and do well they have a chance to progress.

It can also be useful to give people opportunities to try out new roles; “try before you buy”, if you like. This can be done through secondments, day-in-the-life or development programmes.

Many centers have development opportunities designed at finding the next team leader from the agent population; these schemes could be extended to include the many other support roles available in today's contact centers.

4. Management Style

This area is closely linked to communication. Does an employee feel valued? Do they want to come to work? There is an old adage: “you don't leave the business; you leave your manager”.

How many times have you heard someone say “the job's ok but the people are great”? This shows how important management style is to employees.

The contact center should be a great place to work, with an element of fun and hard work. The management approach will go a long way to achieving these goals.

5. Work–Life Balance

Work–life balance is not easy to achieve. Employees have to understand that the business must meet its customers' demands, while the business must understand that employees have external pressures as well and do all it can to help them. The introduction of family-friendly legislation has forced many contact centers to look at how they schedule staff.

Contact centers have then taken this more flexible approach and developed it for all employees, creating a number of lifestyle schedule options that give employees more choice, whilst still meeting the business needs.

These schedule choices are often created by the employees through focus groups, always bearing in mind that the business needs must be met.

Every employee is different and it would be wrong to assume we know what everyone wants or needs, so providing options is a great way of finding a suitable solution for all.



Self-Check Quiz – 2.5.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: Which 3A of Job Characteristics of Customer Services that Affect Motivation on agents?

Question-2: What Is Absenteeism? What is the Formula- To Calculate Absenteeism?

Question-3: Which Five key reasons that contact centers suffer from higher-than-average absenteeism rates?

Question-4: What Is Schedule Adherence? What is its equation?

Question-5: What Is Conformance? What is its equation?

Question-6: Which drivers that are keeping adherence down?

Question-7: What Is Attrition Rate? What is the Formula- To Calculate Attrition Rate?

Question-8: Which five ways to improve attrition are?



Answer Key – 2.5.1

Answer-1:

Like Agent Absence (A), dealing with Adherence (A) and Attrition (A), These 3A of Job Characteristics of Customer Services that Affect Motivation on agents and these issues can also be a real pain for contact center leaders.

Answer-2:

Absenteeism is the percentage of unauthorized time that members of the contact center team are absent from the floor. It is also known as “absence rate”.

The Absenteeism Formula

$$\text{Absenteeism (\%)} = \frac{\text{Number of hours taken off for unauthorised absence}}{\text{Total hours scheduled by the workforce over the period}} \times 100$$

Answer-3:

Five key reasons include:

6. Schedule dissatisfaction
7. Lack of follow-up
8. Culture
9. Stress
10. Team Leaders

Answer-4:

Schedule Adherence

Schedule adherence is the percentage of the agent’s scheduled working day when they are present at work. This includes all internal shrinkage activities. For further clarification, here’s an equation for contact center adherence:

$$\text{Schedule Adherence (\%)} = \frac{\text{Minutes in Adherence}}{\text{Total Scheduled Minutes}} \times 100$$

Answer-5:

Conformance

Conformance is a percentage measure of the amount of time that an agent spends at work, versus the amount of time that they were scheduled to work.

The formula for conformance looks like this:

$$\text{Conformance (\%)} = \frac{\text{Actual Work Time}}{\text{Schedule Work Time}} \times 100$$

Answer-6:

The drivers that are keeping adherence down.

- Last Minute Calls
- Slow Login Processes
- Agents are Unaware of the Impact
- Aim for Reasonable Targets

Answer-7: What Is Attrition Rate – Definition

Attrition is the rate at which members of staff leave the workforce over a given period of time.

The attrition rate formula is:

Attrition Rate % = (No. of Employees that left During period) ÷ (Average Number of Employees for period) × 100.

$$\text{Attrition Rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{No. of Employees That Left During Period}}{\text{Average Number of Employees for Period}} \times 100$$

Answer-8:

The following top five ways to improve attrition are:

- 1. Skills Development.**
- 2. Communication.**
- 3. Promotion/Progress.**
- 4. Management Style.**
- 5. Work–Life Balance.**



Information Sheet 2.5.2

Learning Objectives: You will be able to apply practical methods for motivating your employees, which will also improve agent retention, morale and performance.

HOW TO MOTIVATE A TEAM: Strategies-Engagement-Gamification

Content Summary:

Seven Strategies: To Increase Staff Motivation in the Contact Center

- 1 Inculcate importance of the workplace.
- 2 Leading with emotional intelligence.
- 3 Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback.
- 4 Building a Culture of Enabling Environment.
- 5 Managing Matrices effectively.
- 6 Finding ways to break monotony.
- 7 Generating innovative ideas.

Retention Strategies: To Improve Employee Retention in Your Contact Center

Staff Engagement: How to Motivate Employees

- Purpose
- Potential
- Play

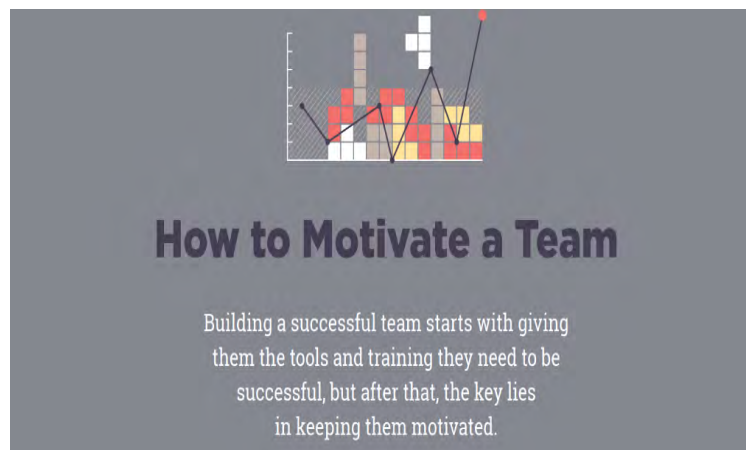
Motivational Games: Games to Liven Up the Contact Center

1-Seven Strategies to Increase Staff Motivation in the Contact Center

Motivation is an internal driver that encourages us to put more effort into the tasks we take on. But, because it's intrinsic, we can't force someone to be motivated. Instead, we have to create the right conditions to inspire motivation.

Here, we mention **7 Strategies** (methods) to Increase Staff Motivation in the Contact Center. Each of the seven methods will help you do so, as we covered each of the following principles for helping to motivate agents in the contact center:

- Connecting agents with the values of the brand
- Creating a purpose so people feel like they're making a difference at work
- Giving feedback so that agents feel a sense of achievement
- Offering consistent recognition and introducing elements of fun
- Enabling a good work-life balance



1. Inculcate importance of the workplace (Create Meaning)

Many members of your team want purpose over pay cheques. They want to have a mission and the knowledge that what they are doing makes a difference to people. Engaging employees starts with remembering what your business stands for. Ideally, we therefore want to have a key organizational goal and engage our agents with that, so they feel a real connection to our organization.

So, let's first think about whether or not agents have a clear "mission" for what they do and how clearly they understand why they are doing it.

If we can relate the tasks that agents are doing to the bigger picture that can help considerably to help agents understand their purpose. Having this purpose is critical and we can fill our team with this sense of purpose by connecting what agents are doing day-in day-out with their own values and what they believe in.

From this point, we can firstly note that we need to be hiring people for their values, which link to our organizational purpose, and creating a culture around that. We then need to ensure that we link the agent role to that purpose, so agents feel as though the job that they are doing has meaning. This will then help to generate extra motivation for helping customers, which can be refilled with regular recognition of good work.

2. Lead with Emotional Intelligence

As leaders, we need to recognize and understand both our own emotions and those of our team, especially the latter, so we gain a better idea of how we can positively influence those emotions. After all, emotions can drive behaviors and impact people, so it is good to assess all the tools out there to see how you can increase your emotional intelligence.

Here are some key tips for increasing your emotional intelligence in management:

- Get to know agents personally, to understand how they express emotions
- Treat each member of the team equally, spending an equal amount of time with each agent, to understand what motivates them
- Be prepared to have difficult conversations, to strengthen relationships and eliminate issues that cause demotivation, before they escalate

All of us would like to work for leaders who follow each of the three tips above, as these leaders are actively looking to better understand our needs, motivations and attitudes. By following these tips and actively managing our emotions, we can ensure that agents feel supported, connected and provide them with a **sense of belonging**. This will boost each agent's motivation to work hard for you.

3. Give and Receive Effective Feedback

The best way to motivate through feedback is to provide short bursts of feedback immediately, both positive and constructive. So, we shouldn't be waiting for set appointments to review performance; we need to engage and motivate the team by providing quick, real-time coaching sessions and holding informal discussions with agents. However, we're not saying that you should get rid of your periodic performance reviews, as these help us to take a deeper consideration of the trends within the agent's performance and link their progress back to our wider goals.

The key is to offer consistent feedback, so that when it comes to these meetings, we are not surprised by what we find. We should know how agents are performing and use this time to plan ahead and set new, motivating, targets for agents. This consistent feedback is important and it should work both ways. We should be actively listening to feedback from agents about the working environment and how the organization is treating them.

We need to do more than carrying out quarterly agent satisfaction surveys and use their feedback to consider the following four areas:

- Focus** – Do we give agents the ability to mentally focus on the task at hand?
- Purpose** – Are agents motivated by a purpose and know the significance of their role in fulfilling that purpose?
- Value** – What value do agents get from the hard work that they put in every day?
- Renewal** – What can agents do between calls and on their breaks to recharge?

Then, when you address what comes back from the feedback and you say **“you said this and we did that”** in each of these four areas, you will increase motivation and retention.

4. Start Building a Culture of Enablement

While your rewards program and job benefits are great for hooking people in, you cannot rely on them to keep agents motivated. After a while, these things become expected, and many contact centers are now realizing this and increasing their focus on creating a culture of enablement, to give additional value in each agent's life.

When you create a culture that gives agents an independence that they cannot gain elsewhere, they will have a greater commitment to your brand and will likely be motivated to work harder for you.

So, what can you do to increase enablement and add value to the agent role?

Firstly, we should design shifts so that people want to work them, instead of being overly focused on efficiency, and make moves to give agents more control over their work–life balance.

Then, we should think about things like allowing agents to make their own decisions when talking to customers and nurturing their creativity. This can help to remove some of the repetitiveness that is often associated with the agent role, which can harm motivation levels.

But just remember, building a culture of enablement takes time, so start by taking small steps and testing the water by finding out what agents would like to see done differently.

5. Manage Your Metrics Differently

Contact center leaders will all have had the experience of when an agent acts in a really odd way that totally frustrates them. Maybe the agent tells us that they can't do something, or maybe they refuse to transfer a call, or whatever, but rarely do these things happen because they don't care. They happen because the agent feels boxed in by policies and procedures. These policies and procedures are often upheld by a manager that micromanages metrics, and we need to be wary of micromanagement, as it's a big demotivator.

Dougie Cameron, COO at The Center for the Moving Image and the Edinburgh International Film Festival, adds: "It's an incredibly rare minority that come into work to do a bad job. Yet a lot of contact centers set up their measurement systems and management processes, across the entire workforce, to capture that minority."

"We need to loosen the reins on efficiency metrics and focus more on customer metrics. The benefits are then going to accrue in a completely different way, less through cost management but, over time, you'll achieve more in terms of customer loyalty, product up-sell and lower attrition, etc."

This relates closely to the previous point of creating a culture of enablement, which we can only do by increasing our focus on the customer and guarding against the dangers of micromanagement. If you do micromanage, your team will fail to see the real significance in their activity, stunting their growth and motivation levels, while also damaging your development as a leader.

6. Find Ways to break monotony.

Motivation levels will change from day to day, which is why we cannot sit back and expect a yearly bonus to motivate our team. We need to be consistently finding ways to give our teams short bursts of enthusiasm, every day.

While having a purpose that gives the agent a sense of meaning is key, some days their engagement levels will naturally be lower because, after all, we are all human.

So, we want to build a fun culture that provides the team with small boosts of extra motivation, but this needs to be organized to some extent – particularly at first, until we can pass the baton over to certain team members.

Make sure there is some variety to the fun activities that are organized, whether it's games, charity fundraisers or celebrating key events in the year.

While it is up to us to get the ball rolling, we don't want to be telling our teams –this is how to have fun". In time, look for the most enthusiastic members of the team to take over.

Just make sure there is some variety to the fun activities that are organized, whether it's games, charity fundraisers or celebrating key events in the year. We don't want the fun to become stagnant; we want to build fresh enthusiasm into the work that we do in the contact center.



But start simple, perhaps with some motivational games, to spark some healthy competition, then maybe ask the team to come up with their own ideas, before then passing over control completely.

You may even get to a point where you give agents a budget to devise their own incentives plan to go alongside their fun initiatives. Just be wary of the dangers of using certain incentives.

7. Create an “Unplanned Routine” or generating innovative ideas

Every leader knows that routines are essential for ensuring that we manage various contact center processes. Routines also help us to actively manage the levels of motivation within our teams.

Yet there is no such thing as a routine day in the contact center. With the constant fire-fighting that is involved in our roles as leaders, checking up on the motivation levels and general well-being of our teams too often falls by the wayside.

We cannot let the unpredictability of contact center management cause us to cancel the time that we set aside for agent development. If we do that, we unwittingly suggest to agents that their development isn't a priority, which may damage their motivation to improve.

To get around this, in our **information sheet 3.1.2 –Essential Management Routines for a Contact Center Manager–**creating an “unplanned routine”.

The key is working with an organized schedule and making it clear to the team when you are and are not available, meaning that you can go about your other tasks without risk of distraction.

However, in the times in which you are available, try to uphold an open-door policy so that agents know that they can speak to you at a one-to-one level, not just in group sessions where whoever shouts the loudest gets the most attention. Be sure to treat everyone equally!

2-How to Improve Employee Retention in Your Contact Center

7 Employee Retention Strategies for Contact Center

Agent retention has long been a challenge for contact centers. With annual turnover rates well above those in other industries, the issue is hard to ignore. In fact, a recent [ICMI survey](#) shows the average contact center's agent turnover rate was 58% year over year. When you factor in the associated costs, such as expenses related to recruiting and onboarding new agents, the issue of high employee turnover becomes downright painful.

Not convinced? Consider the additional effect on employee morale, the ongoing loss in intellectual property, and the long-term implications for the customer experience — the costs can grow far beyond immediate operational expenses.

So why is high employee turnover so common among contact centers? There are a number of reasons. According to a report from research-driven AI company ASAPP, the primary reasons for contact center attrition are:

- Inadequate training
- Low-quality feedback from supervisors
- Metric standards that don't make sense
- Technology that isn't up to par
- Rude or aggressive customers

Regardless of whether you're just getting started or representing a large enterprise, employee turnover is nothing to ignore. Follow the 7 strategies below to improve employee retention in your contact center.

1. Provide Effective Training That Prepares Agents for Success

When it comes to preparing agents to confidently and swiftly address customers' issues, high-quality training is essential. Effective training programs require more than thorough documentation as well. According to the ASAPP survey, [77% of agents](#) say hands-on training and shadowing are more effective than reviewing written materials.

With in-depth training sessions for each of the tools your contact center uses, as well as best practices for navigating conversations, you can clearly establish company goals and expectations while providing your agents with the confidence to tackle any initiative.



2. Show Appreciation for Top Performers

Demonstrating your appreciation for agents who are excelling can go a long way toward improving contact center retention. Employees who don't feel adequately recognized are twice as likely to say they intend to quit their jobs within the next year, according to [Gallup research](#).

Using a combination of rewards, public recognition, one-on-one praise, and promotions helps create a supportive environment that helps agents feel appreciated and valued. A little competition between peers is also a great way to drive productivity, but it should never be the sole means of measuring agent performance and contributions.

3. Go Beyond Metrics to Offer Individualized Coaching

Monitoring agent [performance metrics](#) — which includes service level, agent schedule adherence, call resolution, average handle time, and customer satisfaction — is critical for identifying opportunities to improve. However, these data points shouldn't be the sole way you determine an employee's capabilities and potential. In fact, many contact center employees find adhering to such standards leads to stress and negatively impacts their productivity.

Supervisors must recognize there are other factors that affect an agent's performance. Regardless of where each employee falls on the performance spectrum, it's important to reach out to each agent to review what is and isn't working. Arming yourself with actionable data will help you approach these conversations in a more human way. Leverage intelligent speech analytics and to identify critical moments during customer-agent interactions and determine each agent's strengths and weaknesses in resolving issues and coach accordingly.

You would also be wise to put yourself in your agents' shoes. Employees who exercise empathy can improve the customer experience, of course, but that same tactic is also a good way to ensure each of your agents feels heard and understood.

4. Establish Promising Growth Opportunities

Employees across the entire workforce crave opportunities to develop their skills and grow in their careers. The [Work Institute's 2021 Retention Report](#) reveals that lack of career development opportunities is actually the number one reason why employees decide to quit their jobs. As a supervisor, you must clearly present and offer opportunities for advancement in order to improve employee retention.

There is a range of options you could consider offering to your agents, including offering learning stipends, holding regular career planning meetings, holding skills training sessions, and creating a mentorship program. Additionally, ensure development opportunities are clearly established and regularly communicated to agents. It will encourage them to remain with the company while striving to reach for those

elevated opportunities.



5. Empower Contact Center Agents to Provide Exceptional Experiences

To increase employee productivity, some contact centers have resorted to requiring agents to complete repetitive tasks and processes. The unfortunate byproduct is that this type of monotony leads to agent boredom and prevents creative thinking. But solutions such as [voice-enabled self-service](#) are capable of doing more of that heavy lifting, freeing your agents for more complex interactions that truly warrant their attention.

Understandably, complex issues are more difficult to solve. So how can you ensure you maintain or improve first call resolution rates?

- Give agents immediate access to all customer records with a contact center solution that natively integrates with your system of record, whether it's ServiceNow, Salesforce, or Microsoft Dynamics.
- Use interactive voice response (IVR) to match customers with the most appropriate agent for the issue at hand.
- Leverage automation for agent activities, recordings, transcriptions, and more to empower employees to quickly resolve customer needs and improve their overall job satisfaction.

6. Enable Your Agents to Work From Anywhere

Contact centers are increasingly migrating from on-premise to fully distributed operations. This move to a remote contact center can benefit the customer experience, but only if you hire the right agents and equip them with the technology that allows them to perform every aspect of their jobs within a single platform. By giving remote agents the tools they need to perform their jobs effectively, they can reap the rewards of flexibility and convenience.

Remember that remote work is no longer a trend — it's now the norm.

7. Create a Strong Culture That Encourages Work-Life Balance

Perhaps the clearest signal to agents that you value their contributions is granting them the freedom to enjoy their lives outside of work. Some contact centers are beginning to rise to the occasion. A recent survey from Contact Center Helper shows there was a 5% increase in flexible shifts and a 5% increase in unpaid leave over the last year.

Interactions and activities that take place during the workday can also play a pivotal role in helping to foster a supportive, inclusive work environment that employees want to be a part of. Consider how you can encourage collaboration and implement team-building exercises that help foster a sense of community.

Don't Put Reducing Employee Turnover on Hold

With the right strategies, high employee turnover could become a thing of the past in your contact center. You don't need to take an all-or-nothing approach, either. Consider implementing just one or two of the above strategies to start. Over time, you can weave in additional support as it makes sense.

Now that you have a better understanding of how to improve employee retention in your contact center, you can turn your attention toward other priorities, such as digital transformation. Believe it or not, advanced voice solutions are essential for modernizing and streamlining your contact center operations. Explore the ins and outs of natural language processing to prepare for what's next.

3 Agent engagement

What is agent engagement?

Agent engagement is the process of involving agents in the efficient operation of the contact center, in particular with the WFM process. Done properly, agent engagement creates a win-win culture and reduces staff turnover. It is about giving agents visibility of their shifts and some control over their working times in return for working shifts that are optimized around customer demand and adhering to their schedules.

Why does agent engagement matter?

The most valuable - and costly - resource in your contact center is not the technology, it's the people. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is a rising trend but human agents will not be eliminated from contact centers anytime soon, if ever. Agents who are disengaged will be demotivated and deliver a poor customer experience. They are more likely to have high levels of absenteeism. It's more probable that they will leave the company, and staff turnover is both disruptive and costly. According to The Society of Workforce Planning Professionals, it costs between \$10,000 and \$20,000 to replace a typical agent.

How does agent engagement work?

Agent engagement requires a genuine dialog between the agent, management, and the planning team. [WFM software acts as an enabler for engagement](#) by providing a range of self-service functions. For example:

- **Calendar:** Visibility of the agent's schedules, ideally for several weeks into the future. This predictability is a must-have for good work-life balance.
- **Team calendar:** Visibility of the schedules of the agent's team. This helps agents collaborate with colleagues who have expertise in particular areas. And maybe to join them for lunch.
- **Shift swaps:** The ability to swap shifts with colleagues, ideally with rapid or automatic approval. This boosts work-life balance for the agent and if proper controls are in place, there is no negative impact for the company.
- **Time off:** The ability to book time off, ideally with rapid or automatic approval. Agents are often more interested in the days when they are not working than the days they are working. Agents love being able to check vacation balances and make time-off requests on a self-service basis. Time off requests are typically handled as part of the [real-time management process](#).
- **Shift bidding:** Agents feel more in control of their working lives if they can state their preferences among multiple alternative shifts rather than being presented with shifts without consultation. [Shift bidding can boost agent satisfaction, but obviously has implications for the scheduling process](#).
- **Availability preferences:** Agents can apply constraints on the hours they will be scheduled to work, for example, to cover a recurring medical appointment or education session. This creates extra administration work for the planning team in validating the requests and in negotiation with the agents and their team leaders.
- **Notifications:** Agents should receive reminders about upcoming activities, which help them to adhere to their schedules. If the schedules are integrated into the agents' own calendars, they will receive reminders in the same way they get reminders of personal events, on their mobile devices.

Agent engagement tips

1. Each of the self-service features boosts employee engagement but it isn't necessary to implement all of them.
2. The planning team should not introduce an agent self-service function before coming to agreement with all the stakeholders, e.g. contact center management, team leaders, and HR.
3. Several of the self-service features have negative consequences for schedule efficiency (workload fit) and some of them require additional effort by the planner. Choosing which to implement requires careful balancing of cost and benefit.
4. Realistically, none of the options is viable without a professional WFM application.

Websites versus smartphone apps

Realistically, agent self-service requires software. Typically that means either a website, accessed with a browser, or a smartphone app. There is an app for everything nowadays, but a mobile-friendly web page can provide a similar user experience to an app without agents needing to install and keep updated yet another app on their smartphones.

Engagement versus empowerment

Engagement is not the same thing as empowerment. Empowerment is about giving agents access to the information they need to do a great job - and the autonomy to help customers without having to escalate every non-standard query to management. Both engagement and empowerment are essential to having a satisfied, productive and loyal workforce.

What impact does agent engagement have?

To quote a Tweet by the founder of Virgin Group, Richard Branson:

"If you look after your staff well, they will look after your customers. Simple."

The reverse is also true. Deploying best practice in agent engagement is an integral part of looking after staff. The result is happy employees and happy customers. It's also good for the company, since agent engagement reduces costly staff turnover and has the potential to increase revenue.

Staff Engagement: How to Motivate Employees

We introduce multiple methods for increasing staff engagement in your contact center, while also sharing a checklist to help you find opportunities to motivate employees.

The Three Keys to Engaging Employees

In their book **Primed to Perform** – authors Neel Doshi and Lindsay McCreogor examined how we can build high performing workplace cultures by better understanding human psychology.

In doing so, they put forward three principles for increasing staff engagement: **purpose, potential and play**.

1. **Purpose** – Do you work because you value the impact that your work has? If the outcome of our work meets our personal values, we'll be much more engaged in the process of meeting those outcomes.
2. **Potential** – Is the work that you are doing a stepping stone for your career goals? If we sense that our work is **enhancing** our potential and is helping us to meet future aspirations, we will care a lot more about the work we are doing.
3. **Play** – Are you motivated by the work you are doing alone? If we work because we enjoy it and have the **opportunity** to contribute, be creative and experiment, we will be much happier to undertake the tasks that we're assigned.

Each of these factors has great relevance to contact center management and, if we can build them into our culture, we can systematically improve staff engagement.

Below is a closer look at each of these three key principles, while each section has a mini checklist, so you can assess how well you are motivating agents in each area.

Staff Engagement Key Number 1 – Purpose

Purpose-driven branding is something that has become very big, not just in terms of attracting customers, but in terms of recruiting and engaging staff too. In fact, if you do stand for a certain cause, younger cohorts of employees will find that particularly attractive, as evident in the PwC research that's highlighted below.

The lesson here is that if we, in the contact center, can articulate what our mission is, in a much more visible way, that is a great engagement tool. To help you create a more transparent purpose and boost staff engagement, we have **three key pieces of advice for motivating employees** and, in particular, your younger agents.

1. Teach the “Why” and the “How”
2. Show Staff the Impact That They Make on a Personal Level
3. Have a Stance Around Diversity and Inclusion

Checklist: How Well Are You Engaging Staff Through a Purpose?

From the three points just discussed, here are five key questions to ask yourself when considering how you use “purpose” as a tool for staff engagement:

1. When coaching agents, do you make a point of telling them why they need to do something, as well as how?
2. Do you have any initiatives to bring staff together with customers off the phone?
3. Do you share customer feedback with the agent who handled their contact?
4. Have you outlined a clear diversity and inclusion plan?
5. Do you actively support any charities that support a more inclusive society?

Staff Engagement Key Number 2 – Potential

Not many new recruits walk into contact centers and consider it to be a long-term career option. However, if we can support individuals in meeting their future aspirations and show them how the work that they are doing can help them to reach their future career goals, we can improve staff engagement. In fact, this support can be invaluable, especially when we consider that research by Hays in 2017 found that 81% of employees are considering leaving their job.

So we need to present the work that team members are doing as work that increases their potential. Here are **three ideas that will help you along the way**.

1. Give People a Sense of Moving Forwards
2. Get Creative Around Autonomy
3. Offer Mobile Microlearning Opportunities

Checklist: How Well Are You Engaging Staff Through Potential?

From the three points above, here are five key questions to ask yourself when considering how you use “potential” as a tool for staff engagement:

1. Do team leaders say thank you to agents whenever they do something well?
2. Do we make progression opportunities clear to staff members?
3. Do we have mechanisms for listening to agent ideas for how to improve the contact center?
4. Do agents fully understand how their performance is assessed and do they have a say in it?
5. Do we offer any mobile microlearning opportunities?

Staff Engagement Key Number 3 – Play

we are enjoying our work, then we'll be much more engaged in doing it.

However, no matter how many additional tasks we give agents, the fundamental aspect of the role is going to be very repetitive.

Sure, we can give agents good advice, such as "focus on the intrinsic rewards", but if people aren't happy while they work, that's going to negatively impact staff engagement.

In fact, a Harvard Business Review study found that happy employees experience 31% higher productivity.

So we want to create a workplace culture that has that element of fun to it. Here are **three key pieces of advice** for achieving that within the contact center.

1. Give Staff Control Over the Play
2. Ask the Team to Create Engaging Learning Material
3. Schedule to Meet Young Lifestyles

Checklist: How Well Are You Engaging Staff Through Play?

From the three points outlined in this section in the article, here are five key questions to ask yourself when considering how you use "play" as a tool for staff engagement:

1. Do we give staff the freedom to plan social events and motivational games?
2. Do team leaders know their agents' hobbies outside of work?
3. Do we give expert agents the chance to share their expertise with the wider team?
4. Do we make learning materials available in a variety of different formats?
5. Have staff got any flexibility in their shift patterns, beyond shift swaps?

In Summary

To increase staff engagement, one approach is to focus on three distinct areas of contact center management: **purpose, potential and play**.

If we can build these into our culture, we will systematically increase staff engagement, without having to constantly think of one-off initiatives to build motivation.

Also, to test where you are now, we have built all the information that's included in this module into a simple checklist, which may highlight the key areas that you need to focus on in terms of building staff engagement.

We hope you score well!

Games to Liven Up the Contact Center

Whether your agents are inbound or outbound, you can boost morale with contact center games that they can play while working. So, here we share seven fun activities for your contact center, after highlighting the key elements that make up a great game.

What Makes a Great Contact Center Game?

Morris Pentel, CEO at e-score.today, believes that there are four key elements of a good contact center game:

- Building a fun habit that lifts staff
- Making it a journey that you can progress on
- Making it about improving the common understanding
- Making it OK to lose

As Morris says: “Games and habits are the basic tools of how we change culture in contact centers and improve outcome.”

With the aim being to improve culture, after you have tried a couple of the following ideas, ask agents to suggest game ideas to you. This will better engage the team, who may be more enthusiastic to play games of their own design.

The Seven Contact center Games

Each of these games has proven popular in the contact centers of our readers, who discuss their suggestions below.

1. The –Bookings Ball” Game

The bookings ball game is a spin-off version of the classic pass-the-parcel party game and works particularly well in environments where agents have to make bookings.

Explaining the game, Karen says: “The ball, which could be anything from a tennis ball to an inflatable beach ball, is passed from agent to agent as and when a booking is secured (so the last person to have made a sale is always the person holding the ball).”

“While this is going on, set an egg timer in your desk drawer (in secret). When it goes off, the person holding the ball wins a prize.”

“Reset the timer after each prize is given for the game to continue throughout the day.”

This can be a great way to boost engagement and get the team communicating, as long as you trust your team to be respectful and not to prolong the call deliberately, just so they can be in with a better chance of winning.



As well as for those making bookings, this game could also work in a sales environment, or a service agent could perhaps pass the ball on once they have handled a certain contact type.

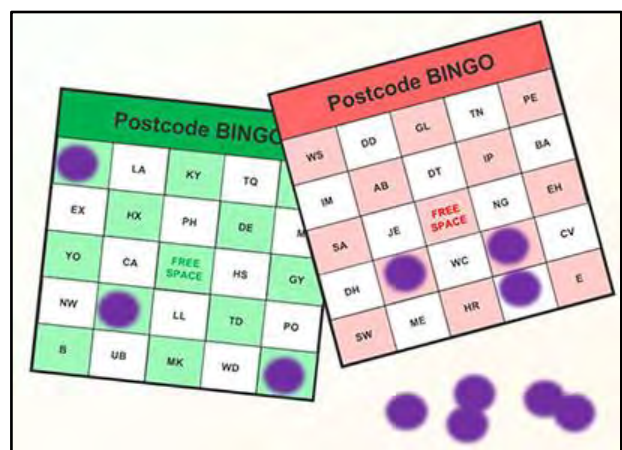
2. The –Postcode Bingo” Game

A game which is easy to play while agents are taking calls is –buzzword bingo”. However, this game runs the risk of delivering a negative experience if agents try to use all the words on their card at once. So many contact centers choose to play postcode bingo instead.

According to Mike, the game begins by “giving agents bingo cards, but rather than having numbers on them, they have postcodes. For example, SA (Swansea), NN (Northampton).”

“The agents then cross the postcodes off their scorecard as and when they speak to a customer who lives in that area.” “You can then give out a prize to the first agent who achieves a „full house” or a line, if you are feeling particularly generous.”

However, when you’re playing this game, ask the team to record the time and date of the ‘winning’ calls so that they can easily be found and listened to when verifying the results.



Follow the link to download our [free –bingo card” template](#).

3. The –Customer Experience” Game

One of Morris’s key elements of a contact center game was “improving the common understanding”, and this game is great at improving the team’s knowledge of what they can do to boost the customer experience.

Alison says that you should first “give each agent a sheet with a list of things that add value to the customer experience (such as advising them of other products or capturing contact details) – and place tick boxes next to each item.”

“Throughout the day, agents can then tick the relevant boxes as and when they perform those actions on a call. The catch being that only one tick can be added per customer, so agents can’t fill in their whole card on the first call of the day.” “When they have ticked off the entire list, they can exchange their sheet for a raffle ticket (and get a new sheet). The tickets are then entered into a draw at the end of the day/week/month.”



The only downside to this game is that it can be quite hard to track if the agent really managed to perform each action. So, perhaps start this among small teams of agents, who would be unlikely to lie to one another, before judging its success and spreading the game out to the wider contact center.

4. The –Customer Compliments” Game

Here is a simple game that you can run all year round, with very little effort. It is great way of providing those little bursts of encouragement which are key to long-standing motivation.

It is really straightforward, as Karen explains: “Every time an agent receives a customer compliment, they are rewarded with a box of chocolates or bottle of wine.” “To make it a bit more competitive, you could keep a running total of the number of compliments each agent receives. You can then offer a more extravagant prize for the agent who has received the most compliments by the end of the year.”



Although it may seem basic, rewarding good customer feedback is a key incentive for agents to really do their best for the customer. Even a thank you to recognize a small piece of good work will go a long way.

5. The –Baseball Quality Scores” Game

Games can be devised using agent quality scores, to greater engage the team with how to improve performance. This is one of those games.

Describing the game, Annette says: “For one month every year, run a “baseball” competition where agents are able to gain home runs or runs based on their quality scores.”

“At the end of the month, the agent with the most can either be rewarded with tickets to a local baseball game, or a gift card – if baseball is not their thing.”

However, if you are not American, the theme of the game can also be altered to accommodate rugby, football or tennis fans, depending on the time of year and interests of the agents.



6. The “Goal Rush” Game

Major events offer a great opportunity to bring some festive fun into the contact center. The Olympics and World Cup are particularly great opportunities to do so.



For the World Cup, a team sweepstake or a break room table football competition are classic game examples, but Cathy prefers another option.

Cathy suggests: *“During the chosen tournament, allocate a country to each of your agents and keep a record of every goal that is scored. The team with the most “goals” at the end wins. You could also do this with gold medals at the Olympics.”*

While this isn’t exactly performance related, it does help to bring the spirit of the event into the contact center, which can be so useful to boost morale.

To further boost morale, consider showing the relevant games on TV screens on the contact center floor, which may also help to reduce absenteeism.

7. Lucky Seats

Don’t send agents off for the weekend on a downer, instead celebrate the week that has just past by playing the “lucky seats” game every Friday. If this game becomes routine, you can create a habit that gives the team a weekly boost.

Trevor, who recommends the game, says: *“Place a winning ticket under a different seat every Friday. Simple mood lifter. Or, if you have a Learning Management System (LMS), have it select random winners who complete weekly learning.”*

“Also, give each agent a raffle ticket for every sale or 90%+ quality score they get. Then, on the last Friday of every month, have a weekly/monthly prize draw.”

In Trevor’s first example, the winning ticket could give the lucky agent a chance to choose an item from the “Winner’s Cupboard”, which is full of various small prizes. Agents can then choose the award that is best suited to them.

Just a Quick Warning

While all these ideas have proven successful in the contact centers of our readers, there may be agents in your contact center who are against the idea of contact center games.

As Craig Rich, Founder of ThreeDotZero Studios, warns: *“Games are great to foster some team spirit, but some people will not want to be involved and people should be mindful of the broad range of personalities that make up contact center teams.”*

“In my humble opinion, some managers make these things mandatory, not taking this into account. It can alienate some team members and potentially create more of a divergent environment that will make life uncomfortable for those people.”

“Everybody has a place and just because some people do not want to get involved does not mean they are less valuable than those who do. Understand your team and develop ideas accordingly.”

So, get to know your team. If you highly incentivize these games and want everyone to take part, make sure you recognize winners in different ways.

For example, an introvert agent may like their prize to come with a quiet well done, whereas an extrovert agent would perhaps prefer the opportunity to make an acceptance speech.



Self-Check Quiz – 2.5.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: Which 5 principles for helping to motivate agents in the contact center?

Question-2: Which Seven Strategies to Increase Staff Motivation in the Contact Center?

Question-3: Which 7 Employee Retention Strategies for Contact Center?

Question-4: Which three keys to engaging employees mentioned by Neel Doshi and Lindsay McGeogor?

Question-5: What are the names of Seven Contact center Games?



Answer Key – 2.5.2

Answer-1:

Following principles for helping to motivate agents in the contact center:

1. Connecting agents with the values of the brand
2. Creating a purpose so people feel like they're making a difference at work
3. Giving feedback so that agents feel a sense of achievement
4. Offering consistent recognition and introducing elements of fun
5. Enabling a good work–life balance

Answer-2:

Following Seven Strategies to Increase Staff Motivation in the Contact Center:

1. Inculcate importance of the workplace.
2. Leading with emotional intelligence.
3. Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback.
4. Building a Culture of Enabling Environment.
5. Managing Matrices effectively.
6. Finding ways to break monotony.
7. Generating innovative ideas.

Answer-3:

7 Employee Retention Strategies for Contact Center:

1. Provide Effective Training That Prepares Agents for Success
2. Show Appreciation for Top Performers
3. Go Beyond Metrics to Offer Individualized Coaching
4. Establish Promising Growth Opportunities
5. Empower Contact Center Agents to Provide Exceptional Experiences
6. Enable Your Agents to Work from Anywhere
7. Create A Strong Culture That Encourages Work-Life Balance

Answer-4:

The Three Keys to Engaging Employees

In their book **Primed to Perform** —authors Neel Doshi and Lindsay McGreogor examined how we can build high performing workplace cultures by better understanding human psychology.

In doing so, they put forward three principles for increasing staff engagement: **purpose, potential and play.**

4. **Purpose** – Do you work because you value the impact that your work has? If the outcome of our work meets our personal values, we'll be much more engaged in the process of meeting those outcomes.
5. **Potential** – Is the work that you are doing a stepping stone for your career goals? If we sense that our work is enhancing our potential and is helping us to meet future aspirations, we will care a lot more about the work we are doing.
6. **Play** – Are you motivated by the work you are doing alone? If we work because we enjoy it and have the opportunity to contribute, be creative and experiment, we will be much happier to undertake the tasks that we're assigned.

Answer-5:

The Seven Contact center Games:

The "Bookings Ball" Game
The "Postcode Bingo" Game
The "Customer Experience" Game
The "Customer Compliments" Game
The "Baseball Quality Scores" Game
The "Goal Rush" Game
The "Lucky Seats"



Information Sheet 2.5.3

Learning Objectives: You will learn to focus on some key themes on motivates others- Reward, Empower and Inspire.

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE: Reward-Empower-Inspire

Content Summary:

What Motivates You Will Not Necessarily Motivate Others

How Do You Motivate Someone?

Reward

Focus on now-that' rewards

Try to limit if-then' rewards

Empower

Don't Be Scared to Believe in People – Give Them Independence

Inspire

You can set up the best motivational framework, but it could still fail because of you.

What Every Leader Needs to Know About People's Motivation

Show your Appreciation

Help your People to Develop Mastery'

Share the Big Picture

With so many factors affecting the uniqueness of motivation, it can be difficult to pinpoint someone's motivation... but with a basic understanding you can do it.

What Motivates You Will Not Necessarily Motivate Others

Some people are motivated by money. Others by philanthropy. Some just like doing a good job' and some want to climb the career ladder. When you start breaking down people's needs and wants even more, it becomes a whole new level of complicated.

But it's worth doing, at least with your direct subordinates. It's worth spending the time to understand what your team's motivations are. On an individual agent basis, take the time to break down:

- Why do they want the money?
- Why do they like doing a good job?
- Why did they get out of bed and get to work on time today?
- What are their career goals?

As an example; if you know someone is motivated by their work-life balance, the offer to leave work early could be more motivating than a small cash reward (plus it could make better business sense). If you know someone is motivated by their work-life balance, the offer to leave work early could be more motivating than a small cash reward.

Once we realize that motivation is not a one-size-fits-all thing, we have to adapt. We have to offer a number of initiatives that help to motivate. It has to become part of who we are and our culture. There is only so long you can keep offering bonuses before it becomes a standard expectation and stops being motivating.

How Do You Motivate Someone?

However, it's a short-term fix that will only take you so far. To create a motivational strategy that's long lasting, you'll need to focus on some key themes: **Reward**, **Empower** and **Inspire**.

Reward

It's not all carrot and stick. You can't play off 'giving people things' (cash mainly) against the 'threat or awareness of minimum targets'.

More Money Does Not Equal Harder Workers

Motivation is not all about reward and punishment. You can't just keep giving out higher bonuses every year in the hope the workforce will feel more motivated. That's not to say rewards don't have a place, but they should not form the main tool of your motivational strategy. Use rewards wisely.

Focus on 'now-that' rewards – these are the rewards that are a surprise to the person, as they learn about it after the event. *–Well done for hitting your target today, here's a £10 voucher.*

Try to limit 'if-then' rewards – these are rewards that people are informed of before the event. *–If you hit today's target you can get a £10 voucher.*

Using 'if-then' rewards can lead to a negative impact on a person's intrinsic motivation (please note, 'if-then' rewards can be used effectively in a contact center environment, but they can only be used when people are doing repetitive, non-creative tasks).

At Ordnance Survey, we have a program called 'Lifeworks' through which employees can nominate one another for rewards (now-that rewards). These rewards are all cash vouchers ranging from £10 to £50, with team rewards also available.

This can be a great way to reward someone for being productive, receiving great customer feedback, or being helpful in any way. There really are no criteria for what you can nominate someone for, which leaves it open for anyone to be recognized for anything, it just needs to be approved by their manager.

Also, simply recognizing someone can be a huge motivator, whether praising them in private or publicly (depending on their preference). Through Lifeworks, everyone at Ordnance Survey can give recognition to a colleague, which can then be seen publicly, with a leaderboard for those that get the most recognitions in a month.

Empower

In a contact center we need to control some factors to manage resource – hitting the business's KPIs, keeping costs down, all while pushing up the Net Promoter Score (NPS). As a manager, you must resist the urge to control everything.

Don't Be Scared to Believe in People – Give Them Independence

To build a trusting relationship, you have to give people ownership of their role and offer opportunities for the team to work in their own way. Allowing people to find their own way offers a sense of meaningfulness and responsibility, which of course leads to motivation.

Give the contact center team autonomy where possible. One of the biggest ways the agents are empowered at Ordnance Survey is by managing their own schedule. Let the team choose their own shifts, let the team work on 'flexi-time' and let the team work from home from time to time.

Choosing of shifts has to be done within rules to ensure resource requirements are met, but at Ordnance Survey we have email, social media, webchat and phone call shifts to choose from, and there is variety of start and finish times available. On most shifts, the start and finish times are also flexible (so they can finish early if they want) and everyone can even accrue 'flexi-time' and use it to book days off.

Every agent has the ability to work from home! If they have a minor disaster and the plumber is popping around, or if they're getting a sofa delivered, they don't need to use up their leave and put our resource under stress; instead they can put in a full day's work at home. All this flexibility leads to a better work-life balance, as people can manage the expectations from their home life against their time in the office.

Inspire

When we feel strongly connected with something it inspires us and provides us with a sense of purpose.

You can set up the best motivational framework, but it could still fail because of you.

Create a purpose, a reason to come to work apart from the money. Become a storyteller and connect a person's role to the bigger picture, making it clear how important they are (because they really are!) and how they truly can make a difference in the organization.

Become a storyteller and connect a person's role to the bigger picture, making it clear how important they are. Please don't just use stats, as dry facts alone can be boring. Bring them to life using emotional language and make them mean something by sparking an emotional reaction.

Your business will have a vision, but does your contact center? Or your team? Where is your future focus?

Ordnance Survey has created a clear 'Line of Sight' where everyone can see how they and their team fit into the bigger picture. Everyone can see how their role affects the company's objectives. To help further give the customer service team a sense of purpose, the Ordnance Survey contact center has created a team charter, in which the team have set their expectations of each other. This helps to foster a sense of pride and keeps some basics in check like attitude and working better together.

What Every Leader Needs to Know about People's Motivation

Most business leaders will have heard of Abraham Maslow and his beautiful pyramid. Maslow describes the motivational factors for humans and, notwithstanding that his work comes in for a good deal of criticism from some quarters, there is a strong degree of attractive logic to his theory. Unfortunately, it doesn't really help leaders to motivate people at work on a day-to-day basis.

Fact: Every person in your organisation is motivated.

The big question is whether they are motivated to do the things that you, as their leader, want them to do.

If they are not doing what you want them to do, they don't simply stop doing altogether, they are simply motivated to be doing something else.

Here are three simple habits that you, as a team leader, can exhibit every day to create a culture that motivates people to follow you willingly.

1. Show your Appreciation
2. Help your People to Develop 'Mastery'
3. Share the Big Picture

1. Show your Appreciation

It motivates people to have their efforts appreciated. That doesn't just mean 'paid for'; it means noted and commented upon. It doesn't have to be a big razzmatazz or a special award or valuable prize, just a simple, low key 'thank you', delivered in person.

Research by Dan Ariely in association with MIT suggests that people whose work is not appreciated need to be *paid* double to be as productive as people whose work is appreciated. This isn't soft fluffiness; it is hard economics.

Conversely, it switches people off when they see their effort completely unappreciated, hidden or destroyed. 'Unsung heroes' of today tend to become the defectors or the saboteurs of tomorrow. So sing! Of course, if you are the leader of a large organization, you seldom actually see many of the people who work for you. Showing your appreciation of their efforts, in person, regularly, is not easy; it takes a lot of time and effort.

There are three habits that can help you if you are in this position:

- Show your appreciation of the efforts of the workforce to your immediate reports. Ask them to pass on your recognition and gratitude.
- Make a conscious effort to refer to the appreciation you have for your workforce whenever you are dealing with outsiders. Whether it is the media, shareholders or customers, make sure to "big up" your staff.
- Practice 'Management By Wandering About Taking An Interest'~ a great way to appreciate someone's contribution is just to take an interest in it, ask questions rather than offering judgements.

2. Help your People to Develop 'Mastery'

At the beginning of the modern era of mass manufacture the watchword was 'efficiency'. The whole job was broken down into small, repetitive chunks and each person solely worked on their chunk. Employees might spend their entire 48 hour week putting the front, left-hand side wheel on cars, but never actually see a complete finished car.

That was the norm when the company was manufacturing cars, and the staff had little education or access to information.

Now your staff members are more educated and have more information at their fingertips than ever before. They also have higher long-term aspirations. They likely to be providing some more knowledge-based service to customers; the basic manufacturing is more likely completed by machines.

Developing 'mastery' of their chosen area of career means that they want to keep abreast of the pace of change, they want to improve their knowledge and skill and they want to broaden their experience. This doesn't mean that as a leader you have to send them all away on long expensive training courses.

Here are three habits that will help you to create an environment where people can gain mastery:

- **Encourage exploration amongst your departments or teams.** Job-swaps or work-shadowing help people understand the bigger picture and provide new eyes to look at old problems and practices. Rather than employing consultants to look at improving performance and processes, encourage your people to do it themselves. When they make recommendations, appreciate them, and where possible implement them. Allow the people to judge what has worked and what hasn't.
- **Encourage 'informal learning':** *"The odds are that development will be about 70% from on-the-job experiences, working on tasks and problems; about 20% from feedback and working around good and bad examples of the need, and 10% from courses and reading."* 'The Career Architect Development Planner' Lombardo and Eichinger So encourage people to take on responsibilities above their grade level, even if only for short periods.
- Encourage the setting of challenges for individuals and teams (not *higher* targets, but challenges to improve **things**, solve problems and learn and demonstrate new skills).
- Encourage teams and individuals to seek performance feedback, to analyse and to learn from both good and bad experience. (This is an area that can be challenging; analysis of bad experiences can often appear to be or descend into "blame sessions", analysis of good experiences can be seen as a waste of time..." it went well, why the post mortem?").
- Encourage your people to read, to benchmark and to use the web and social media to keep abreast of new developments and competitor activity.
- **Keep the more formal learning going;** invest money and intelligent effort in providing in-company training and development. Sponsor people to gain relevant qualifications.

3. Share the Big Picture

It is often said that what separates a *'manager'* from a *'worker'* is the ability *'to see the bigger picture'*.

That may well be one of the important characteristics, but it doesn't mean that the people lower down the hierarchy aren't *motivated* by being shown the bigger picture.



There is that old story where a visitor to NASA in the 1960s saw a janitor sweeping the floor and asked him what he was doing; "Helping to put a man on the moon" was the reply. (It probably isn't a true story; why on earth would anyone look at a man who was sweeping a floor, and ask him what he was doing?)

As a parable, the story hints at the day-to-day motivational effect of knowing the overall purpose of the organisation *and* how your little bit contributes to that grand design. Implicit in it is also the fact that the janitor had a pretty good idea how the organisation as a whole was doing in relation to actually getting Neil Armstrong to take that 'one small step, one giant leap'.

Most CEOs will share these elements with their colleagues on the Senior Management Team (SMT).

To create an environment that motivates everyone you need to make sure that these messages are spread quickly and frequently to the whole workforce - including the janitor!



Self-Check Quiz – 2.5.3

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question-1: How Do You Motivate Someone in the contact center?

Question-2: Which three simple habits that you, as a team leader, can exhibit every day to create a culture that motivates people?

Question-3: Which three habits that will help you to create an environment where people can gain mastery?

Question-4: Which three habits that can help you if you are leader of a large organization?



Answer Key – 2.5.3

Answer-1:

However, it's a short-term fix that will only take you so far. To create a motivational strategy that's long lasting, you'll need to focus on some key themes: **Reward, Empower and Inspire.**

Answer-2:

Here are three simple habits that you, as a team leader, can exhibit every day to create a culture that motivates people to follow you willingly.

4. Show your Appreciation
5. Help your People to Develop Mastery
6. Share the Big Picture

Answer-3:

Here are three habits that will help you to create an environment where people can gain mastery:

1. Encourage exploration amongst your departments or teams
2. Encourage informal learning
3. Keep the more formal learning going;

Answer-4:

There are three habits that can help you if you are leader of a large organization:

- Show your appreciation of the efforts of the workforce to your immediate reports. Ask them to pass on your recognition and gratitude.
- Make a conscious effort to refer to the appreciation you have for your workforce whenever you are dealing with outsiders. Whether it is the media, shareholders or customers, make sure to **“big up”** your staff.
- Practice Management By Wandering About Taking An Interest~ a great way to appreciate someone's contribution is just to take an interest in it, ask questions rather than offering judgements.



Review of Competency Final Checklist

For the performance criteria of the module **Lead and Manage Team for Contact Center** is given below:

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 2.1

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
2.1.1	Contact center demand is forecasted using 4 Prediction Model .		
2.1.2	Average Handling Time (AHT) is measured.		
2.1.3	Occupancy & Shrinkage in the contact center is calculated.		
2.1.4	Service Level standard is determined.		
2.1.5	Call Abandon Curve is plotted.		
2.1.6	Number of staff is calculated using Erlang Calculator.		
2.1.7	Staff are mapped to best shift pattern.		
2.1.8	Major time allocation pitfalls are explained.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 2.2

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
2.2.1	Five (5) Stages of Tuckman Ladder for team development is demonstrated.		
2.2.2	Agents are selected as per service requirement.		
2.2.3	Role of team members is identified.		
2.2.4	Responsibilities of team members are assigned through internal meeting.		
2.2.5	Steps for building trustworthy team are applied.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 2.3

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
2.3.1	Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)/ Responsible, Accountable, Consult, Inform (RACI) chart are described.		
2.3.2	Elements of team charter are identified and described.		
2.3.3	Cross-functional team communication techniques are interpreted.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 2.4

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
2.4.1	Techniques to handle stress in the Contact Center is explained.		
2.4.2	Customer interaction is monitored and sentiment is analyzed.		
2.4.3	Causes of ambiguity and conflicts are identified.		
2.4.4	Five (5) type of Thomas-Kilmann conflict management style are analyzed.		
2.4.5	Steps of conflict redressing techniques are determined and applied.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 2.5

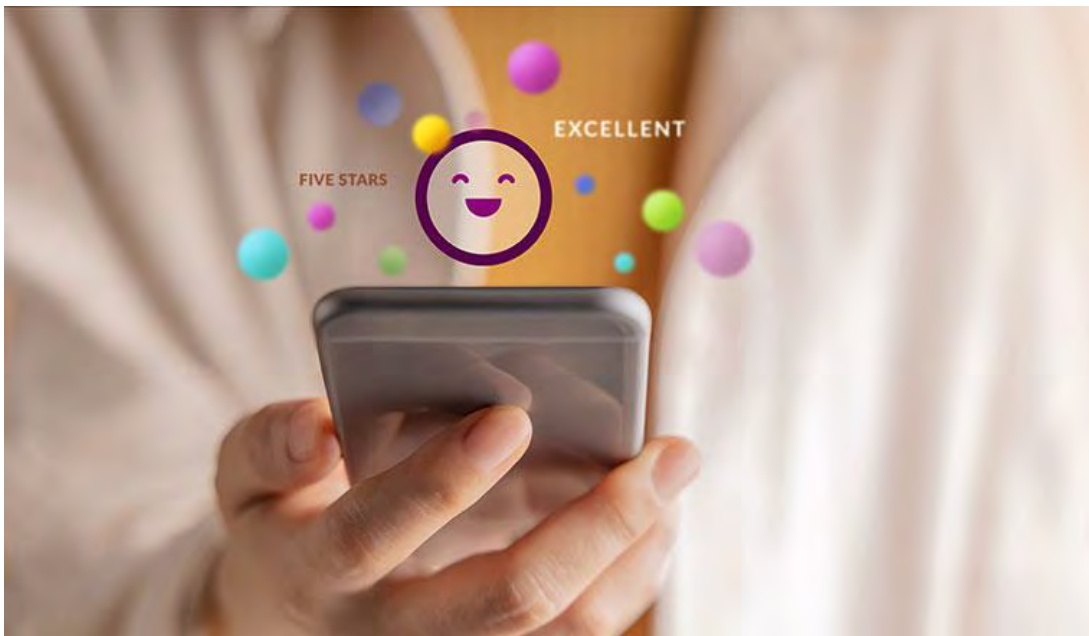
CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
2.5.1	Seven (7) Strategies are identified to increase staff motivation.		
2.5.2	Absenteeism is calculated and managed.		
2.5.3	Attrition rate is calculated and reduced.		
2.5.4	Scheduled adherence is calculated and improved.		
2.5.5	Three (3) keys to engaging employees are applied for motivating team members.		
2.5.6	Team members are rewarded and inspired with incentive.		
2.5.7	Games to liven up the team are performed.		

Now, I feel ready to undertake my formal competency assessment.

Signed:

Date:

Module 3: Operate Contact Center Processes



Module 3: Operate Contact Center Processes



Module Content

Module Descriptor: This Module covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to operate contact center processes. It specifically includes applying contact center process, identifying key points for improving contact center process, handling and resolving contact center escalation and generating & analyzing report.

Nominal Duration: 80 hours



Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, trainee/student will be able to:

- 3.1 Apply contact center process.
- 3.2 Identify key point for improving contact center process.
- 3.3 Handle and resolve contact center escalation.
- 3.4 Generate and Analyze Report.



PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1. Steps for outstanding customer service are interpreted.
2. Essential management routine is applied.
3. Obstacles against outstanding service delivery are explored and identified.
4. Service delivery channel is optimized for faster and better service.
5. Cost-of-service failures are calculated.

6. Customer interactions are analyzed.
7. Approaches to elevate service quality are identified.
8. Techniques to build a culture of continuous improvement are applied.

9. Ways to handle call escalations are demonstrated.
10. Customer requirements are identified.
11. Methods to improve complaints handling in Contact Center are described.
12. De-escalation Techniques are applied to handle an Angry Caller.
13. Skills and diplomacy are applied to ensure customer satisfaction.

14. Segmented data from relevant sources is collected.
15. Collected data is analyzed using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software.
16. Report is prepared as per requirement.
17. Report is shared with authority.



Learning Outcome 3.1 - Apply Contact Center Process



CONTENTS:

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE: Steps to Aligns Goals and Processes.

ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT ROUTINES: For Outstanding Customer Service.

CHALLENGES OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE DELIVERY: Explore and Identify

OPTIMIZING SERVICE DELIVERY CHANNEL: Putting customer value first

COST OF POOR SERVICE: Exploring and calculating.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Steps for outstanding customer service are interpreted.
2. Essential management routine is applied.
3. Obstacles against outstanding service delivery are explored and identified.
4. Service delivery channel is optimized for faster and better service.
5. Cost-of-service failures are calculated.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

Workplace (actual or simulated).

Tools, equipment and facilities appropriate to the process or activity.

Materials relevant to the proposed activity.



Learning Activities – 3.1

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
3.1 Apply contact center process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 3.1.1 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 3.1.1 ▪ Answer Key: 3.1.1 ▪ Activity Sheet 3.1.1



Information Sheet - 3.1.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to provide your team clear direction by defining outstanding customer service with tools, and techniques can use to elevate a customer service team's performance.

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE: Steps to Aligns Goals and Processes.

Content Summary:

The Key Steps Towards Delivering Outstanding Customer Service:

Step-1: Defining outstanding customer service

- I. Developing service standards
- II. Defining customer service goals
- III. Aligning a team around outstanding service

Step-2: Evaluating Service Quality

- I. Understanding how “icebergs” can sink service
- II. Exploring the voice of customer feedback
- III. Improving service quality

Step-3: Identifying obstacles to outstanding service

- I. Exploring how incentives can hurt service
- II. Fixing broken service systems
- III. Empowering employees
- IV. Helping employees prioritize great service

Step-4: Optimizing Service Delivery

- I. Putting customer value first
- II. Balancing speed and quality
- III. Developing service channels
- IV. Scheduling customer service employees

Step-5: Calculating the cost of poor service

- I. Connecting service to the bottom line
- II. Exploring the escalating costs of service failure

Step-6: Continuously process improvement

When everyone at a company has the same end goal, the entire workflow becomes streamlined. Keep your focal point on your customer, then move through each department to align them behind customer service.

Outstanding Customer Service = **Aligns Goals & Processes**

The Key Steps towards Delivering Outstanding Customer Service:

In today's hyper-competitive market, where information is more freely available, businesses need to meet the ever-changing customer expectations. It needs a concrete customer service plan that goes far beyond internal analysis.

Finally, organizations should continually evaluate and improve their customer service processes to ensure they are delivering outstanding service. This may involve investing in new technologies, training programs, or incorporating best practices from other successful businesses.

Below is the blueprint that, if implemented, could benefit your business by ensuring it continually focuses and improves customer service.

Step-1:

Defining outstanding customer service: The first step is to **outline policies** to ensure the regular operations are consistent with all customers. The **customer needs** are broad so it is important to ensure your business can meet their expectations. This step is to define the customer service goals and objectives, ensuring they **align with the overall organizational strategy**. This can include setting specific targets for customer satisfaction, response time, and resolution rate. These standards promote consistency when interacting with customers, help define quality customer service, and they provide well-documented guidance that makes it easier to train employees.

Step-2:

Evaluating Service Quality: Improving service quality is a critical mission for every customer service leader. **Identify a service gap, find the root cause, and take action to fix it.** Involve your employees in this process. Employees can get really energized about outstanding customer service, when they get to help solve problems.

Step-3:

Identifying obstacles to outstanding service: In a perfect world, our employees would make serving customers their top priority. But is that reality? To see for yourself, try observing employees serve customers. See if customers truly are the most important, or if other tasks take precedence. There are a few reasons why delighting customers might not be the top priority for employees. **In this step 3**, we will explore obstacles that can make it difficult for your employees to deliver outstanding service.

Step-4:

Optimizing Service Delivery: Customer service leaders frequently face pressure to keep costs under control. The knee-jerk reaction is to cut expenses. Unfortunately, many of these cost-saving measures come at the expense of unhappy customers. So, in this step, we will also cover ways that you can optimize service delivery to provide service that's faster, cheaper, and better.

Step-5:

Calculating the cost of poor service: Explore smart ways to measure service levels, and learn about the true cost of poor service. In this step, we will look at the business case for improving customer service by calculating the cost-of-service failures.

Step-6:

Continuously process improvement: Finally, organizations should continually evaluate and improve their customer service processes to ensure they are delivering outstanding service. This may involve investing in new technologies, training programs, or incorporating best practices to elevate a customer service team's performance. **[This step we will cover details in the next learning outcome 3.2]**

Overall, aligning organizational goals and processes with customer service is an ongoing process that requires a commitment to understanding and meeting customer needs. By following these **6 steps**, businesses can provide outstanding customer service that sets them apart from competitors and builds customer loyalty. Let us deep dive:

Step-1: Defining outstanding customer service

In this step we will explore the three points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to defining outstanding Customer Service:

- I. Developing service standards
- II. Defining customer service goals
- III. Aligning a team around outstanding service

I. Developing service standards

Many companies create service standards to guide their employees. These standards promote consistency when interacting with customers, help define outstanding customer service, and they provide well-documented guidance that makes it easier to train employees. Creating effective standards can be tricky. If you're not careful, they can actually lead to poor service. One way this can happen is when there are too many standards.

Let's look at an example from a bank. Here's a list of service standards their bank tellers are expected to follow on every transaction. As you can see, this bank has 15 customer service standards. Customer service employees typically have to meet each standard or they might receive a poor customer service evaluation. That's a daunting task where there are so many required steps for what's typically a short transaction. And this isn't that uncommon. Have seen companies that have more than 30 standards for their employees to follow.

Bank Service Standards

1. Greet every customer using branded greeting.
2. Display positive body language (for example, smiling).
3. Confirm customer's request.
4. Learn customer's name.
5. Call customer by name.
6. Ask questions to establish rapport.
7. Complete requested transaction efficiently.
8. Identify opportunities for upselling.
9. Suggest an additional product or service.
10. Counter objectives with appropriate product knowledge.
11. Provide receipt for transaction.
12. Point out the survey invitation on the receipt.
13. Ask customer if they need any additional assistance.
14. Call customer by name at the end of the transaction.
15. Use branded farewell salutation.

Employees might appear robotic as they try to remember all of the standards they are supposed to meet. Service standards can also create negative situations if they're too inflexible and employees aren't able to adapt to a customer's specific needs. My local grocery store used to require cashiers to offer carryout assistance on every purchase. One day I bought a pack of gum. The cashier dutifully asked, "Would you like help out with that?" It was an awkward situation, but I learned that the cashier could've gotten into trouble if she had failed to offer carryout assistance while a mystery shopper or supervisor was watching. So, if we need to have some standards but having too many standards is bad, how do you find a happy medium?

Here's a few suggestions for you. **First, create broad guidelines rather than strict standards.** This gives employees flexibility within a standard framework to adapt to each customer's unique needs. **Next,**

make sure your customer service guidelines align with your company's brand. It may help to get your marketing department involved for this one. **Finally, consider how each guideline impacts your customers.** Some ideas sound good in theory but don't work well when you put them into practice. Let's go back to the bank teller example I showed you earlier. How could the bank transform their rigid list of 15 standards into flexible guidelines that would result in better service?

Here's one example. The bank might do well with just three guidelines. **First, make customers feel welcome.** This covers appropriate greetings and body language, but it's also flexible enough to allow a teller to adapt her style to a first-timer or to a long-time customer who they know on a first-name basis. **Second, efficiently serve customer needs.** This includes everything from what customers need and helping them as quickly as possible. It might also cover opportunities to suggest faster alternatives, such as the bank's new mobile banking app. **That brings us to the third guideline.**

Look for additional opportunities to serve. This might include upselling to a customer who could earn more interest on their balance or taking a moment to explain an item on a customer's statement. Now it's time for you to try it out. Keep in mind that great standards provide your employees with flexibility within a clear framework.

II. Defining customer service goals

Goals can serve an important role in helping to manage customer service teams. They can help us measure progress towards important business results, focus the team on top priorities, and help motivate employees to give their best effort.

Here, we are going to share with you the SMART model for creating goals. SMART is an acronym for **specific**, so it's clearly defined, **measurable**, so you can objectively determine your progress, **attainable**, so employees have a reasonable chance of achieving it, **relevant**, so it's connected to your customer service vision, and **time-bound**, so you have a deadline to achieve your goal. There are several versions of the SMART model out there, so you may have seen something slightly different in the past. This one just seems to be the most common. Here's an example of how the SMART model can make a goal much more effective. We will start with a fuzzy goal that I've seen many times, improve customer service. A lot of teams have goals like this. It's hard to tell exactly what we're supposed to do and no one knows whether or not we've achieved it. Now, let's see what happens when we apply the SMART model to this fuzzy goal. **Achieve an 85% average customer satisfaction rating on the customer service survey by December 31st.** It's specific, measurable, relevant to outstanding service, and time-bound because we've set a deadline for achieving it. It would also be attainable, as long as 85% is within reach of our current rating.

Setting goals using the SMART model is a start, but not all SMART goals are good. If you're not careful, you could accidentally set goals that actually lead to poor service. Here is an example. A technical support team help the customers experiencing computer trouble. Each time a customer contacted them, a support agent would open a trouble ticket to track the issue. The team had a goal of closing tickets within an average of one business day. So, what was the problem? Team members started closing tickets even if the problem wasn't resolved, just so they could meet the goal. This was especially true of more complicated problems that often took more than one day. This left unresolved issues, so customers would have to recontact the company and open a new support ticket to get the help they needed.

Experienced agents will be more likely to share their wisdom with less-experienced agents, since everyone shares the same goal. And, the agents are more likely to get excited about helping customers, rather than winning a contest or avoiding punishment.

Activity-1: Setting great customer service goals can be both an art and a science, so, we have included some activity for you on the **SMART goals worksheet**, that's in the **Activity sheet 3.1.1**. We encourage you to use this worksheet to set SMART goals for your customer service team.

III. Aligning a team around outstanding service

When the wheels on your car aren't properly aligned, it becomes difficult to keep it pointed in the right direction. Customer service teams are the same way. Everything needs to be aligned with your customer service vision so the team can deliver outstanding service.

This section will introduce you to a tool you can use to conduct your own customer service alignment check. You may practice **Activity-2** to use the **Alignment Check Worksheet** that's contained in the **Activity sheet 3.1.1.** end of this information sheet.

We'll go through the assessment step by step so you can check your team's alignment. The assessment consists of **five statements**. Rate your organization on each one using a scale of one to five, with one being almost never and five being almost always. Here's the first statement, our organization sets clearly defined goals that represent progress towards the customer service vision. This element looks at how well your smart goals are aligned with the customer service vision. We consistently hire employees who are passionate about our customer service vision. The element looks at hiring. Not every employee will be a great fit for your team. Employees are given sufficient training to teach them how to deliver customer service that matches our customer service vision. Your customer service vision is only effective if employees can describe it and explain how it relates to their jobs. Employee roles, responsibilities, and expectations are clearly defined and linked with our customer service vision. It's important to ensure that customer service standards, job descriptions, and policies are all clearly linked to the customer service vision. Employees are routinely given feedback on how well their performance matches our customer service vision.

Feedback is critical for on-going development. Just like a driver nudges the wheel to keep a car on course, a customer service manager must constantly monitor employees and ensure they're focused on the right things. Now that you've rated your team's alignment, it's time to add up your scores. You may want to pause just a moment and then hit Play again once you've added them all up. Okay, do you have your score. Let's look at how you did. A score of 20 to 25 indicates alignment. Key elements of your team are all pointed in the right direction. A score of 13 to 19 indicates partial alignment. Some elements are pointed in the right direction, but a few adjustments are necessary. A score of 12 or less indicates the team is out of alignment. If your score is in this range, don't worry. The nice thing about this assessment is you can use it to spot some easy fixes to improve customer service. If your score indicates alignment, congratulations. Very few customer service teams are fully aligned. Many customer service leaders want to help their team improve, but they don't know where to start. This assessment is designed to help initiate that conversation. You can use it to engage employees, executives, and other key stakeholders in discussions around improving the team's performance.

Step-2: Evaluating Service Quality

In this step we will explore the three points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Evaluating Service Quality:

- I. **Understanding how “icebergs” can sink service**
- II. **Exploring the voice of customer feedback**
- III. **Improving service quality**

I. Understanding how “icebergs” can sink service

Good customer service managers spend a lot of time worrying about service failures. In many cases, warning signs were missed. I call these warning signs “icebergs” because what you see is small compared to what's lurking below the surface. This video will explain how to look for icebergs so you can stop small problems from becoming big ones. It's an essential skill that will help you continuously improve service. The first step is probably the hardest. Don't assume it's an isolated incident. We're so geared towards solving problems for our customers that it can be difficult to stop and wonder if the problem might be even bigger. This happened to me with my book “Service Failure”. I just received the first copies of the book from the publisher. I kept the first copy for myself, gave the second to my wife, and gave the third to my parents when I visited them that weekend. While visiting my parents, my dad pulled my aside and he showed me book. It's a brand-new book but the pages were already falling out, like

this. My first instinct was to promise my dad, I'll get him a new book. Fortunately, I remembered the iceberg theory and decided to check the other books my publisher had sent. Sure enough, the same pages fell out of every book in the box. This wasn't an isolated incident. I had found an iceberg. Once you find an iceberg, you need to take the next step. Find the root cause. If you don't find the root cause, the problem might just keep happening. If you do find the root cause, you'll get a much better sense of the problem. How big is it? Who is impacted? And how can you fix it? When I discovered the problem with my book, my first step was to call the publisher. They did an investigation and quickly discovered an issue with the book binding. My publisher gave me both good and bad news. The good news was their printer had fixed the problem and was reprinting the books. This was a big win since it prevented many customers from receiving defective copies. The bad news was a few books had already been sent to retailers and were used to fill customer orders. And that leads us to the third step: be proactive. It's almost always cheaper and easier to proactively fix a problem than to wait until your customers notice. With my book, I worked with the publisher to take a few proactive steps to help customers who received a copy of the book with the book binding problem. We set up a procedure where customers could call a phone number and request a replacement book without going through the hassle of returning the defective one. I published instructions on my blog and personally reached out to anyone I knew who had purchased the book. Most people I talk to hadn't yet discovered the problem, so they were happy to have a solution ahead of time. I also personally inspected every book I saw for the next several months. This included books that were shipped to me, copies I found in bookstores, and even books that people bought elsewhere and asked me to sign. This last step actually resulted in the discovery of quite a few defective books. Readers were happy that I was able to replace their book right away. So, are you ready to be an iceberg hunter in your organization? Let's recap some of the benefits. If you find problems early, you'll often be facing a small problem rather than a big one. Miss the warnings signs or, worse, ignore them and you'll soon have to deal with a much bigger mess. That leads us to customer impact. Think about what happens when customers experience a problem. They contact you for service, they tell their friends, they even take their business elsewhere. Finding icebergs reduces all of this and that leads us to the thing our executives care most about: cutting costs. Fewer problems means fewer contacts which saves money, improves word-of-mouth, and can help you retain customers. Think of it this way: a friend of mine recently told me he found an iceberg, a bug in the company's billing software. It might be hard to get an executive's attention if that's the story you tell. But what if I told you it was a \$50,000 problem that could easily be fixed? Now executives are listening. And that's the value of finding icebergs.

II. Exploring the voice of customer feedback

In this video I'm going to show you various ways that you can collect customer feedback. This feedback is often called voice of the customer or VOC. As customer service leaders, we need to be obsessed with it. VOC can help us identify problems and improve service quality. And if we get good at doing that, we can learn how to stand apart from our competitors. **Here are six ways you can collect VOC information.** Customers share feedback and problems with their employees all the time. The trick is finding a way to capture this data so we can spot emerging trends. One option is to ask your employees informally. You can do this in a team meeting where employees brainstorm common issues and then rank them based on how often they hear about each one. If you're using customer service or customer relationship management software, you might be able to automate this process. Check with your vendor to learn more. A contact type report will tell you the specific reasons why customers are contacting you. This data can often alert you to problems such as a new product that's experiencing a high number of defects. Some companies use customer service software that can automate this process. If you don't have software to do that, you can still accomplish the same result by having your employees track contact types manually. Another great way to collect VOC data is through a customer service survey. Do your customers review your company on an external site such as Yelp or TripAdvisor? If so, you already have a great source of VOC data. Customer service leaders often worry that these sites are just a place for angry customers to rant and rave. The truth is most reviews are actually positive. But like it or not, these reviews are going to happen so you might as well turn lemons into lemonade and use these reviews to learn all you can about how to make your service even better. The payoff can be high overall ratings which will help attract more customers. Do you know what your customers are saying about your company on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites? Some customers will include you in the conversation by tweeting directly to your company or posting a message on your Facebook page. Other customers will just talk about your company without including you in the conversation. Either way, it's important to monitor these social media conversations so you know what customers are saying about you. It's a way to build engagement and identify problems early on. Alerts can let you know when someone is talking about your company online outside of social media. This includes blogs, news stories, and other websites. Google Alerts is a free tool that allows you to do this with minimal effort. There are

other more sophisticated software programs that are also available. Customer service leaders are sometimes afraid of feedback. They worry that customers might use it as a chance to complain. If this worries you, it might be helpful to think about the age-old philosophical question, if a tree falls in the forest but no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? A modern version might refer to customer service. If a customer wants to share feedback but nobody's listening, do they still have a problem? Of course they do. And they'll be glad to take their business to a competitor if they don't think your company is listening. We've got to listen to customers if we want to elevate our service from good to outstanding. I encourage you to identify opportunities to obtain feedback from your customers.

III. Improving service quality

Improving service quality is a critical mission for every customer service leader.

In this section, we will be going to walk you through a three-step process for solving problems, and elevating customer service. You may practice **Activity-3 Service Quality Improvement Worksheet** that's contained in the **Activity sheet 3.1.1.** end of this information sheet.

The first step is to identify the gap between existing and desired performance. In order to improve service, we need to clearly identify where we want to be, and compare it to where we are now. For example, let's imagine a chain of health care clinics that has recently received a lot of complaints from patients, who feel they had to wait too long to see the doctor. It's not enough to say, "We need to get better," or, "We want to reduce complaints." That's too general. We need to define the problem more specifically. Here's what our gap identification might look like. Let's say we look at our voice of customer data and notice that 25% of patient complaints are related to long wait times. That's our existing performance. We could then set a SMART goal to reduce wait time complaints by 50% within three months. This allows us to focus our efforts specifically on reducing wait time complaints.

The second step is to conduct a root cause analysis. This allows you to pinpoint the specific causes of the problem. It might be helpful to examine three categories identified by customer service researcher, John Goodman. Goodman estimates that 50 to 60% of service failures are caused by poor products, services, or policies. In other words, it's the company, not the employee, that caused the problem. Goodman estimates that 20 to 30% of service failures are caused by customers themselves. And finally, Goodman estimates that 20 to 30% of service failures are caused by customer service employees. Breaking the problem down in to potential categories can help us identify the root cause. One way to do this is to witness the situation first hand. Let's take a look at some observation notes from a visit to one of the health care clinics. We can start with the product, service, or policy category. There's a lot of paperwork required for new patients. This would make them late for their appointment, even if they arrived on time. Perhaps we can find a way to alert patients ahead of time. We might experiment with asking them to come in 15 minutes early for their initial appointment. Another option is to put the paperwork on a website for patients to download and fill out before coming to their appointment. In fact, we might try both approaches as an experiment to see which one works better. Okay, what about the customer? Is there anything we can do to encourage patients to arrive on time? Perhaps we can schedule reminder calls. Or, we might find some patients prefer to receive reminders via text or email. This might be another experiment. And, when we remind new patients about their appointment, we can remind them about all the paperwork they'll need to fill out, so they won't be surprised by it. Finally, let's look at employees. Our notes suggest the receptionist wasn't very warm or friendly. The receptionist might benefit from some additional coaching, but it might also be a symptom of working with a lot of patients who are upset about their wait time. If we can decrease wait times, the receptionist might suddenly find it a lot easier to be friendly. One thing the receptionist can do is set clear expectations on wait times. Here, a little coaching will definitely help. As you can see from this example, there might be many root causes. We can probably reduce complaints, even if we're only able to address a few of these issues. This brings us to our third step.

The third step is to take action. We need to test out some of these ideas and see if they'll actually reduce complaints about wait time. Now that we've covered the three steps, I invite you to select an aspect of your team's service that you'd like to improve. Identify a service gap, find the root cause, and take action to fix it. You can download the service quality improvement worksheet and use it as your guide. One final tip. Involve your employees in this process. Employees can get really energized about outstanding customer service, when they get to help solve problems.

Step-3 Identifying Obstacles to Outstanding Customer Service

In this session we will explore four points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Identifying obstacles to outstanding Customer Service:

- I. Exploring how incentives can hurt service
- II. Fixing broken service systems
- III. Empowering employees
- IV. Helping employees prioritize great service

I. Exploring how incentives can hurt service

Many customer service managers rely on incentives to motivate employees to work harder, faster, or better. These incentives include cash, prizes, or even extra time off. Let's start by looking at some of the ways incentives can lead to poor service.

One is gaming. Employees may be tempted to bend the rules or work against the spirit of the incentive to earn the prize. Retail associates have been caught submitting fake surveys to earn an incentive for high survey scores. Auto mechanics have recommended unnecessary repairs to earn an incentive for upselling additional services. Contact center agents have refused to cancel customer accounts to earn an incentive for customer retention.

Another problem caused by incentives is begging. Employees will sometimes plead with customers to help them earn an incentive. You may have encountered this with customer service surveys. It's now become a common practice for employees to ask customers to complete a survey and explain that they can earn a reward for receiving positive remarks. It creates an awkward situation and it could also distort your survey scores.

So if incentives cause trouble, how can you motivate customer service employees? Time and time again I've seen employees go above and beyond the call of duty for their customers when they believe that everyone on the team was working towards a shared goal of outstanding service. Empowered employees feel free to use their personalities. They become more creative problem solvers and they often become much more committed to making sure their customers are happy because they can take ownership of the situation. Employees love to be able to solve problems that will make their customers happier and in turn, make their jobs easier.

Smart contact center leaders engage their employees in problem-solving exercises on a regular basis. It allows employees to feel like experts at their craft who can take an active role in creating positive experiences. When employees aren't motivated, it's often because something is preventing them from being their best. Most employees naturally want to do a good job. They get down when they don't see the team working towards a common goal when they aren't empowered to fix problems or when their manager or leader doesn't listen to their ideas. **Incentives will not fix these problems but good leadership can.** If you can help your employees, be great at what they do, you'll likely have a very motivated team.

II. Fixing broken service systems

Customer service employees are often blamed for problems they didn't cause and they aren't able to fix. These problems are the result of broken service systems. It might be a poor product, an unreliable service, or a procedure that just doesn't work. These situations demotivate employees, aggravate customers, and waste everyone's time. As customer service leaders, we need to identify these situations and try to fix them. Let's start by identifying a customer service problem that's outside of your employees' control.

I'll use an example from a software company that has a few bugs in its latest software update. Start by describing the problem at the top of the worksheet. In this case, the bugs are causing a spike in contact volume and some customers have to wait up to an hour to speak to an agent when they call. Before we start thinking about solutions, **it's helpful to identify the impact of this problem on an individual, department, and organizational level.**

At an individual level, a problem like this could really affect morale. Customers are angry about the bug. Long hold times are making customers angrier, and it's stressful to work with all these angry

customers. We can then look at the impact from **a team perspective**. There's a 10% decrease in customer satisfaction, and overtime costs are up 17%. Finally, let's look **at the organizational impact** of the problem. Account cancellations are up 11%, and revenue has decreased 13% to budget.

Now let's see if we can **come up with some solutions**. We can start at the **individual level again**. Here are two things that might help our employees work through this challenge. Empathizing with customers can make them feel better at the end of the interaction than they did at the beginning. When stress levels increase, employees might be tempted to speed through the contact. Focusing instead on first contact resolution can uncover opportunities to answer additional questions and ensure customers don't need to call a second time. Now let's see what we can do **at a team level**. One solution is to use even more overtime to clear the backlog. Customers often contact companies multiple times when they're waiting for an issue to be resolved. So we can actually reduce our contacts and get our queue back to a manageable level. This can actually save us overtime expense in the long run. We can also try triaging our contacts by assigning our most experienced reps to tackle the most challenging problems, and having our less experienced reps handle the easier questions. This can allow everyone to work a little faster. Now these ideas might buy our team some temporary breathing room, but they won't fix the fundamental problem.

For this, we'll need to involve other department leaders. They might not care if our team is swamped with calls, but they should be interested in fixing a problem that's costing the company both customers and money. Here are some solutions we might be able to create with the help of other leaders. The software team could issue a patch to fix the bug. We could also rope in the marketing team to proactively communicate the fix to customers who might be affected but don't know it yet. This could prevent a lot of customers from contacting the customer service team if they receive the fix automatically.

Activity-4: Try to identify a customer service problem that wasn't caused by your team, and use the **service systems worksheet that's contained in the Activity sheet 3.1.1. end of this information sheet** to identify solutions. The exercise can shift employees' focus from feeling blamed to feeling positive about helping to solve a challenging problem.

III. Empowering employees

Outstanding customer service often comes down to empowered employees. They'll find a way to do the right thing when they're able to adapt to each unique situation. On the other hand, service failures are bound to happen when employees are constrained by senseless policies or rigid rules. This session takes a close look at empowerment. **We'll explore reasons why leaders don't always empower their employees**, and we'll look at ways to give your employees the freedom to do what's right. Let's start with some reasons why employees aren't empowered. See if any of these apply to your organization. **One reason is fear**. Companies are afraid that employees will give away the store if they're allowed to do whatever they want to serve customers. **Another reason is consistency**. If an employee does something special for one customer, doesn't that mean we have to do the same thing for all customers? That brings us right back to fear of giving away the store. **Yet another reason is laziness**. It takes a lot of effort to empower employees with clear guidelines and then monitor their actions. Some leaders see rigid policies as a shortcut around all of this.

Did any of those examples apply to your organization? If so, don't worry, they're all very common. What's important is realizing that disempowering employees can lead to poor service. It forces employees to rely on their supervisor for even the tiniest of decisions. Or if a supervisor isn't available, they have to tell a customer no when it's obvious that yes, it's the right thing to do. So how can we empower employees without causing chaos?

Here are a few steps you can take. **Step one** is to ensure everyone on your team understands the customer service vision. This is a shared definition of outstanding service that serves as a compass to point everyone in the right direction. For example, one company's customer service vision focuses on loyalty. When an employee encounters a difficult situation, they think about what they can do to get the customer to remain loyal. It helps them look beyond policies and focus instead on solutions.

There will always be some red lines that can't be crossed, but the difference between normal procedure and those red lines is a gray area. Creating clear guidelines is a way to let employees know the difference between the red lines and the gray area. The Ritz Carlton hotel chain provides a

terrific example. Each associate is empowered to spend up to \$2000 to fix a problem for a guest. How much they actually spend is up to their best judgment, but \$2000 is the red line.

The **third step** is to provide employees with feedback about their empowerment decisions. This helps ensure consistency among all employees and also prevents employees from developing any bad habits. Recognizing an employee's good decision will encourage them to be empowered. Coaching employees on poor decisions will help them make better choices in the future.

Now one word of caution. Be careful not to punish an employee who doesn't cross a red line. If they stayed in the gray, punishing them for making what they thought was the right call will discourage them from being empowered in the future. This is a process that can take some time as you put all the pieces in place, but the potential payoffs are huge. You'll have happier customers, happier employees, and you'll be a happy boss because you'll spend less time managing situations your employees are empowered to handle.

IV. Helping employees prioritize great service

In a perfect world, our employees would make serving customers their top priority. But is that reality? To see for yourself, try observing employees serve customers. See if customers truly are the most important, or if other tasks take precedence. There are a few reasons why delighting customers might not be the top priority for employees. Let's explore a few.

Conflicting priorities is one problem. For example, many contact center employees are held to a top-time standard while they're supposed to prioritize first contact resolution. It's difficult to simultaneously try to end the call faster, while also making sure you've completely resolved the customer's problem. Observation is another challenge. A supervisor in a retail store might ask an associate to arrange a merchandise display and serve customers. At the end of the day, it's far easier to tell if the display is completed than if customers were well-served. So employees naturally devote more attention to activities that are observed.

Frequency is also an obstacle to prioritization. Employees tend to understand something's importance by how often their boss talks about it. Many customer service leaders spend a lot of time discussing problems, metrics and tasks, but very little time talking about customer satisfaction. So how do we overcome these challenges and help our employees prioritize customer service?

Here are a few steps you can take. Make it explicit. Don't assume that serving customers will naturally be your employees' top priority. When a manager says, "I'm not worried about how long that call takes, make sure you solve their problem," or "the merchandise display can wait if a customer needs your help," employees will understand that service comes first. Discuss it frequently. Top customer service leaders talk about service with their employees on a daily basis. They review survey results in team meetings, share success stories via email and on bulletin boards. And they discuss service with employees one-on-one. Employees will understand that service comes first when their boss talks about it all the time.

Finally, customer service leaders need to hold their employees accountable. Even with explicit instructions and frequent discussion, employees may sometimes fail to make their customer a top priority. Perhaps they're having a bad day, or they're just distracted by something else. Whatever the case, it's up to their leader to provide them with coaching and feedback to get employees back on track. Someone once said that you can tell a person's real priorities by looking at their wallet and their calendar.

Step-4 Optimizing Service Delivery

In this step, we will explore four points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Optimizing service delivery to provide service that's faster, cheaper, and better. :

- I. Putting customer value first
- II. Balancing speed and quality
- III. Developing service channels
- IV. Scheduling customer service employees

I. Putting customer value first

Customer service leaders frequently face pressure to keep costs under control. The knee-jerk reaction is to cut expenses. Unfortunately, many of these cost-saving measures come at the expense of unhappy customers. A more effective approach is also a counterintuitive one. You've probably seen those self-checkout lines at grocery stores. They've become a source of customer frustration and the butt of endless jokes from standup comedians. Many grocery stores have recently replaced them with regular checkout lines staffed by employees. They found that this actually moves lines faster, and shorter lines equals more repeat business. In other words, spending a bit more money on employee wages is good for the bottom line. Companies are often more successful when they put customer value first. I'd like to propose an experiment. Take a look at what's driving the biggest expenses in your customer service budget. Perhaps it's a busy day when staffing levels are high, or maybe it's a new self-service technology. Whatever it is, see if you can build a business case for making your budget look better by focusing on customer value.

Here are a few examples.

Return policies. A few companies have figured out that making returns easier encourages more repeat business, and few customers actually take unfair advantage of the policy. Retail stores often try to keep staffing levels at a minimum to save money. A few stores have figured out that having more staff during busy times can actually generate more sales. Customers are able to get the help they need, and they're more likely to return, because they didn't have to wait in a long line. Some companies have tried to improve email responsiveness by giving employees pre-written email templates. Unfortunately, these canned emails often miss the mark and result in additional back and forth. A few companies have focused their employees on writing clear and thorough responses to customer emails. These messages take a little longer to write, but they cause the overall email volume to go down. Many companies invest in self-service technology as a way to cut costs. They use automated prompts in their phone system and try to drive customers to self-help options on their websites. A few companies have realized that self-service works much better when it actually makes service faster and more enjoyable for customers. One major company recently reduced customer inquiries by 60% just by making the self-service section of their website easier to access and more intuitive to use. Many companies try to keep costs down by skimping on employee training. A few companies invest a lot of time and money on training their employees, because they recognize it results in better service and happier customers. It also leads to lower turnover, since employees are more likely to feel confident in their jobs.

Okay, these are just a few examples. My challenge to you is to find hidden savings in your organization by focusing on customer value, not cost cutting. It might be staffing, technology, or policy or procedure. Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo and do a little experiment. If you can make things easier and better for your customers, you're likely to find this will reduce costs and increase revenue in the long run.

II. Balancing speed and quality

Many customer service employees have two diametrically opposed goals. They're asked to maximize both speed and quality when it comes to serving customers. Contact center employees try to solve problems on the first call, while keeping the average length of their call as short as possible. Restaurant servers try to make every guest feel welcome, while serving the needs of multiple tables. Retail employees try to spend time helping each customer, while serving long lines of people who need assistance. Employees often struggle to find the right balance in these situations. Let me give you an example. Take a moment to download the Numbers Game worksheet. Once you have it in

front of you and a pen at the ready, press play once again. Okay, here's the challenge. When I say go, see if you can connect all the numbers in order, starting at one, and working on up. I'll give you 15 seconds to get it done and I'll even put a timer on the screen to countdown from 15. Ready? Go. (beeping) (clock ringing) So, how did you do? Chances are you had to hunt a little bit for each number. And I bet the beeping timer didn't help your concentration much, either. This is an example of how speed and quality struggle to work together.

Think about your last visit to a restaurant or a retail store on a busy day. What happens to service quality when employees are busy and stress levels rise? You might notice a few things missing. You probably saw fewer personal connections as employees rushed around to complete their tasks. Listening skills get degraded when employees don't give each customer their full attention. And helpfulness goes out the window when there isn't any time. So, what can we do to help our employees balance speed and quality? The counterintuitive solution is to focus their attention on quality. In most cases, speed will take care of itself. Let's go back to the numbers game worksheet. One of the things that makes this exercise difficult, is the numbers aren't arranged in order. What if we could rearrange the numbers so they were in order? It would be a lot easier to connect all the numbers this time. Here are some examples you can try in your workplace. The numbers game is an example of improving processes. A real-life example is the bell staff at a hotel rearranged their luggage storage room so suitcases were easier to find. They could spend less time searching for suitcases and more time providing their guests with extra attention. Another option is to refocus on quality. The contact center realized that focusing on call time caused a lot of problems to go unresolved, which meant customers often had to call back a second time. They refocused their agents on first-call resolution, and callbacks quickly decreased. Which means that they had less volume. Strangely, the average length of their calls didn't go up. Agents were still working quickly.

They were no longer distracted by the clock, so they made fewer errors. Finally, there are times where you just need to bite the bullet and increase capacity by adding staff. A retail store increased sales and service by having enough staff on hand to give customers personalized attention. I have one last piece of advice that a successful customer service leader once shared with me. He told me that any time he wants his employees to work faster while maintaining quality, he first does an experiment to see if it can actually be done. There have been many cases where he quickly realized that speeding things up would only cause problems. I encourage you to try this with your team. When in doubt, focus on quality first, and you'll often speed things up by providing better service with fewer errors.

III. Developing service channels

The number of communication channels companies use to serve their customers has increased considerably in recent years. This section will give you an introduction to managing multiple service channels and provide some guidance to help choose which channels are right for your organization.

Activity-5: To start, we recommend use the **Service Channels worksheet** that's contained in the Activity sheet 3.1.1. end of this information sheet. Once you have it in hand, we'll go through a few short exercises together.

Here are the five preferred customer service channels that every business should consider:

1. **Voice**
2. **Text**
3. **social media**
4. **E-mail**
5. **Chat-bot**

Okay, let's start by taking a look at some of the most popular service channels. Take a look at the list on the Service Channels worksheet and mark which ones your organization currently uses. Now think about which department owns each channel. For example, it's not uncommon for operations to own in-person service, customer service to own phone, email, and chat, and marketing to own Twitter and Facebook. It's important to identify the owner for each channel so we know who is serving our customers. There's place on the Service Channels worksheet where you can identify the owner for each one. The next exercise will help you see each channel from your customer's perspective. Try to contact your organization through each of your service channels. If possible, use the same

request, such as a question about a product or a service. Make a note of a few things for each contact.

First, think about how easy it was to find the channel. Did you have to dig around on your website to find a phone number, or was it prominently displayed? Next, identify how easy it was to contact your company using the channel. Did you have to answer 20 questions just to send an email, or was it fast and easy? The third thing to note is how quickly you received a response. Were tweets responded to in a timely manner? Was there a lag time on chat? Fourth, ask yourself if your question was answered and answered correctly. If you asked the same question via multiple channels, was the question answered consistently?

Finally, think about whether your experience was consistent with your organization's customer service vision. As a reminder, this is how your organization defines outstanding customer service. Every channel will be a bit different, but these tests will help you understand how they're working together. If your channels are optimized, it should be easy for customers to get service using the channel they prefer. If your channels are not optimized, I'd suggest working with the department that owns that channel to create a more consistent customer service experience. The one thing we haven't yet covered is adding new service channels.

Here are a few things to consider if you want to add new ways for your customers to connect with you. One consideration is whether there's enough customer demand. Might be tempting to try every new thing, but each new channel takes up valuable time, money, and resources. Another consideration is can you serve your customers effectively using this new channel? If the answer's no, then you shouldn't implement it. Finally, ask yourself if you can serve your customers in a manner that's consistent with your customer service vision. Again, if the answer is no, then you shouldn't implement it. Many people get excited about new technology. As you evaluate your service channels, I encourage you to think instead about effort. The latest and greatest technology won't help you if it frustrates customers and drives them to another channel. With each service channel, your goal should be to make the service experience as easy and as pleasant as possible for your customers.

IV. Scheduling customer service employees

For details, please read **Information Sheet – 2.1.4 CONTACT CENTER SCHEDULING: Shift Pattern and Staff Bidding**

Step-5 Calculating the Cost of Poor Service

In this step we will explore two points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to analyze business case for improving customer service by calculating the cost-of-service failures:

- I. Connecting service to the bottom line
- II. Exploring the escalating costs of service failure

I. Connecting service to the bottom line

Customer service leaders and corporate executives often look at service a bit differently. We need to link our goals to the issues our executives care about the most if we want to have their support. Here's an example. A contact center director wanted to set some goals for his department. He thought about the metrics he cared about most such as efficiency, solving problems and customer satisfaction. Then he thought about what his CEO asked him about most often. The CEO constantly asked him about reducing costs, customer retention and revenue growth. To get the CEO's attention, the contact center director needed to find a way to connect what he cared about to the metrics his CEO is most concerned with. Let's take a look at how the contact center director did this. We start by looking at three critical business metrics. Cost reduction, revenue protection and revenue growth. All three of these point directly to an organization's bottom line. Our goal is to link key customer service

metrics with each of these three-business metrics.

Here's how the contact center director did it. First he found two efficiency metrics that linked the CEO's cost reduction goal. They used a third party contact center to help them handle spikes in volume. This gave them a lot of flexibility, but it cost more money to send a call to the outside contact center than it did to keep it in house. So the contact center director decided to focus on reducing the number of outsourced calls since this linked efficiency to cost production. They also had issues that might cause a customer to contact them a second or third time to address the same problem. This annoyed the customer and increased the company's expenses. Tracking first contact resolution could also help the contact center director reduce waste. Now let's look at revenue protection. The contact center director linked two metrics to the CEO's goal. The contact center director tracked account cancellations to discover the leading causes of customer defections. He also tracked good will discounts given for service recovery to discover the leading causes of these service failures.

Finally, let's take a look at revenue growth. There are a few ways that customer service might increase revenue. The contact center director tracked new accounts that came through referrals since great service made it more likely for people to recommend them. He also tracked the percentage of trial accounts that converted into paid accounts so he could see the impact of pre-sales service on revenue growth. The contact center director met with the CEO of his company after completing this exercise. Instead of discussing customer service metrics, he framed the conversation around what the CEO cared about the most. Cost control, revenue protection and revenue growth. The contact center director shared his plans to make an impact in each specific area and explain how he was using key metrics to track his progress.

By the end of the conversation, the CEO couldn't hide his big smile. The contact center director was speaking his language. Okay now it's your turn. I encourage you to use the Business Linkage worksheet to identify ways that customer service can impact the business metrics your senior executives care most about. That's the key for all of us in customer service. We're much more likely to get buy-in from executives if we can connect customer service to business results.

II. Exploring the escalating costs of service failure

Service failures can be expensive to a company. But it's not always easy to see their impact. Sometimes they're hidden in multiple places within the customer service budget. Other times, these costs surface in other parts of the company. Let me give you an example. I called my cable company to upgrade to their phone, internet, and cable bundle. Unfortunately, it took three appointments before they could get everything working correctly. The first technician thought he had it right, but I discovered a problem a few days later. The second technician couldn't figure out how to fix it. It wasn't until the third technician came out that the installation was completed. We're going to take a closer look to see how this service failure cost the company money.

The cost of service failures falls into three general categories. Servicing costs, goodwill costs, and lost revenue. Servicing costs are the costs required to provide service, such as labor, parts, and equipment. Here it helps to differentiate between normal costs and additional costs that are caused by a service failure. For instance, here are the general components of a normal installation for the cable company. There's a sales call to a customer service rep to upgrade service and schedule the installation. There's also the cost of sending a technician to the customer's home, to do the installation. These are normal costs, but look at the servicing costs in my example. The first two steps are normal, but I had to make two additional calls to technical support, and be home for two more appointments, before the installation was complete. The challenge for the cable company is their sales, technical support, and field service teams all have separate budgets and different managers. If someone isn't trying to tie these together, it will be hard to spot how much this is costing them. Goodwill costs are another component of service failures.

This refers to discounts or freebies that a company gives away, as a way of apologizing for service failures. It might be a free dessert in a restaurant, bonus frequent flyer miles on an airline, or complimentary express shipping on an online store. In my case, the cable company gave me a free month of service. That's a month I would've paid for if the service failure hadn't happened. Lost revenue is the third cost of service failures. This can happen in a number of ways. There's customer churn, where the customer takes their business to a competitor. Customers may stay with you, but reduce the amount they spend with your business. Customers may also opt not to increase their spending when they normally would have. The cable company kept me as a customer. But the service failure cost them opportunities to earn more of my business. Every time they've come up with a new

product, or service, I remember my poor installation experience. This lack of confidence has literally cost the cable company thousands of dollars, when you spread it over the years I've already been a customer, and likely will be in the future. Now here's the really scary part for the cable company. What if my experience wasn't an isolated incident? If this was an iceberg, and it happened to many customers, you'd have to multiply the cost of the service failure by the number of people impacted. Pretty soon you have an enormous opportunity to reduce costs and increase revenue, just by getting installations right the first time.

Activity-6: Calculating the real cost of service failures can be challenging, but it's a worthwhile exercise for any customer service leader. We encourage you to use the **service failure cost worksheet** under **Activity Sheet 3.1.1** to evaluate the cost of a common service failure in your organization.

Activity Sheet 3.1.1

Activity-1 SMART Goals Worksheet

SMART Goals

Use this worksheet to help you set team goals that fit the SMART model:

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Attainable
- R = Relevant
- T = Time-bound

SMART Example

Here is a real goal from a real company that is definitely not SMART:
Improve customer service.

Here is the same goal after it becomes SMART:
Improve our average customer-service survey score from 82% to 85% by the end of the third quarter.

What are your goals?

	SMART Goals
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Implementing Goals

1. Share the goals with your team. (Better yet, have them help create the goals.)
2. Publish the results so employees can follow the team's progress.
3. Review the goals periodically to stay on course.

Activity-2 Alignment Check Worksheet

Alignment Check Worksheet

This worksheet can help you check the alignment between your customer service vision and five key factors. What is your department's customer service vision?

Alignment Check

Please read the five statements below and rate your organization on a scale of 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always).

Statement	Ratings
Customer Service Objectives. Our organization sets clearly defined goals that represent progress toward the customer service vision.	
Employee Selection. We consistently hire employees who are passionate about our customer service vision.	
Training. Employees are given sufficient training to teach them how to deliver service that matches our customer service vision.	
Job Design. Employee roles, responsibilities, and expectations are clearly defined and linked with our customer service vision.	
Performance Management. Employees are routinely given feedback on how well their performance matches our customer service vision.	

Key

Result	Total Score
Alignment – you are positioned to deliver outstanding service	20–25
Partial alignment – some areas for improvement	13–19
Out of alignment – significant opportunities for improvement	< 12

Activity-3 Service Quality Improvement Worksheet

Service Quality Improvement

This worksheet can guide you through three steps to improving customer service quality.

Step 1: Identify the Gap

The first step is to identify the gap between the existing and desired performance.

Existing Performance	Gap	Desired Performance

Step 2: Root Cause Analysis

The next step is to conduct a root cause analysis. The best way to start is to observe customer service in action. According to customer service researcher John Goodman, service problems generally fall into one of three categories:

Poor Products, Services, or Policies	Customer Error	Employee Error

Step 3: Take Action

It's time to take action and solve the problem. Here are a few tips:

- Involve employees to generate more ideas and improve buy-in.
- Involve other departments if needed.
- Focus your solutions on achieving the desired performance.

Activity-4 Service Systems Worksheet

Service Systems

Use this worksheet to identify and diagnose a broken-system problem. Broken systems include faulty products, unreliable services, or poor policies that result in service failures.

Problem Statement

Level	Problem Impact	Solutions
Individual		
Team		
Organization		

Activity-5 Service Channels Worksheet

Service Channels

Use this worksheet to evaluate the customer service channels in your organization.

Channel	Owner	Discovery?	Contact?	Response?	Answered?	Consistent?
In-person						
Web						
Phone						
Email						
Chat						
Video Chat						
Text						
Mobile						
Twitter						
Facebook						
Mail						
Fax						

New Channel Evaluation - New service channels should pass three tests:

1. There's enough customer demand to invest in this channel.
2. You can serve customers effectively using this channel.
3. You can service customers consistently using this channel.

Activity-6 Service Failure Cost Worksheet

Service Failure Cost

Use this worksheet to estimate the potential cost of a service failure.

	Estimated Cost	Number of Service Failures	Total Cost
Servicing Costs			
Goodwill Costs			
Lost Revenue			
			Total:



Self-Check Quiz – 3.1.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What three points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to defining outstanding Customer Service?

Question 2: What three points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Evaluating Service Quality?

Question 3: Which four points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Identifying obstacles to outstanding Customer Service?

Question 4: Which four points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Optimizing Service Delivery?



Answer Key – 3.1.1

Answer 1: The following three points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to defining outstanding Customer Service:

- I. Developing service standards
- II. Selecting customer service goals
- III. Aligning a team around outstanding service

Answer 2: The following three points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Evaluating Service Quality?

- I. Understanding how “icebergs” can sink service
- II. Exploring the voice of customer feedback
- III. Improving service quality

Answer 3: Following four points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Identifying obstacles to outstanding Customer Service:

- I. Exploring how incentives can hurt service
- II. Fixing broken service systems
- III. Empowering employees
- IV. Helping employees prioritize great service

Answer 4: Following four points that are essential for contact center Team leaders to Optimizing Service Delivery:

- I. Putting customer value first
- II. Balancing speed and quality
- III. Developing service channels
- IV. Scheduling customer service employees



Learning Outcome 3.2 - Identify key point for improving contact center process



CONTENTS:

ELEVATING SERVICE QUALITY: 5 Approaches to developing your team.

CONTACT CENTER PROCESSES: How to Continuous Improvement



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Customer interactions are analyzed.
2. **Approaches to elevate service quality** are identified.
3. Techniques to build a culture of continuous improvement are applied.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ingredients and relevant materials
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities
- Paper and Pen



Learning Activities – 3.2

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
3.2 Identify key point for improving contact center process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 3.2.1 to 3.2.2 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 3.2.1 to 3.2.2 ▪ Answer Key: 3.2.1 to 3.2.2



Information Sheet – 3.2.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to focus on ways to elevate service quality.

ELEVATING SERVICE QUALITY: Approaches to developing your team.

Content Summary:

5 Approaches to elevate service quality:

1. **Monitoring all channels**
 - I. Hop on The Live Chat Trend
 - II. Email Support Is Not Dead
 - III. Have A Presence on Social Media Channels
 - IV. Manage Phone Support
 - V. Forums or Message Boards
2. **Receiving feedback from agent**
 - I. A feedback-positive culture
 - II. Honest feedback loops between management and employees
 - III. Collect employee feedback using pulse surveys
 - IV. Regular one-on-one meetings
 - V. Anonymous feedback methods
3. **Coaching following a consistent routine**
 - I. Contact Center Coaching Through Role Play
 - II. Make Contact Center Coaching Feedback Palatable
 - III. Use Self-Assessment When Coaching Agents
 - IV. Goal-Setting: A Motivating Contact Center Coaching Tool
 - V. Coaching Contact Center Agents Periodically
4. **Following up Coaching by Tracking Improvements**
5. **Investing in Smart Software**

Contact Center Team leaders dream of having a team of talented employees who are all focused on delivering outstanding customer service. The best customer service leaders also discuss service one-on-one with their agents. Each of these discussions touches on customer service vision, standards, or goals in some way. In this section, we share 5 approaches to elevate service quality that has given you some tools, resources, and ideas to get there.

5 Approaches to elevate service quality

Key performance indicators are the bread and butter of the contact center industry, and for good reason. Keep a record of every call, including statistics such as when it arrived, how long it takes to answer, how long it lasted, who answered it, how many times it was transferred and to whom, and what type of call it was (for example, sales or service). Use this information, along with feedback from customers, to set goals and monitor KPIs.

Here are 5 approaches to implement your action plan to improve your quality scores:

1. **Monitoring all channels**
2. **Receiving feedback from agent**
3. **Coaching following a consistent routine**
4. **Following up Coaching by Tracking Improvements**
5. **Investing in Smart Software**

1-Monitoring all channels

The first step to improving quality scores in your contact center is to monitor every channel. If the customer support provided by your contact center is omnichannel, then so should your monitoring system and practices. Too often, contact centers focus their QA attention on voice calls, but how agents interact via email, live chat, and SMS are equally important.

Top 5 Preferred Customer Service Channels

Improving customer support in your contact center begins with being active on your customers' preferred customer service channels. It's all about meeting people where they are.

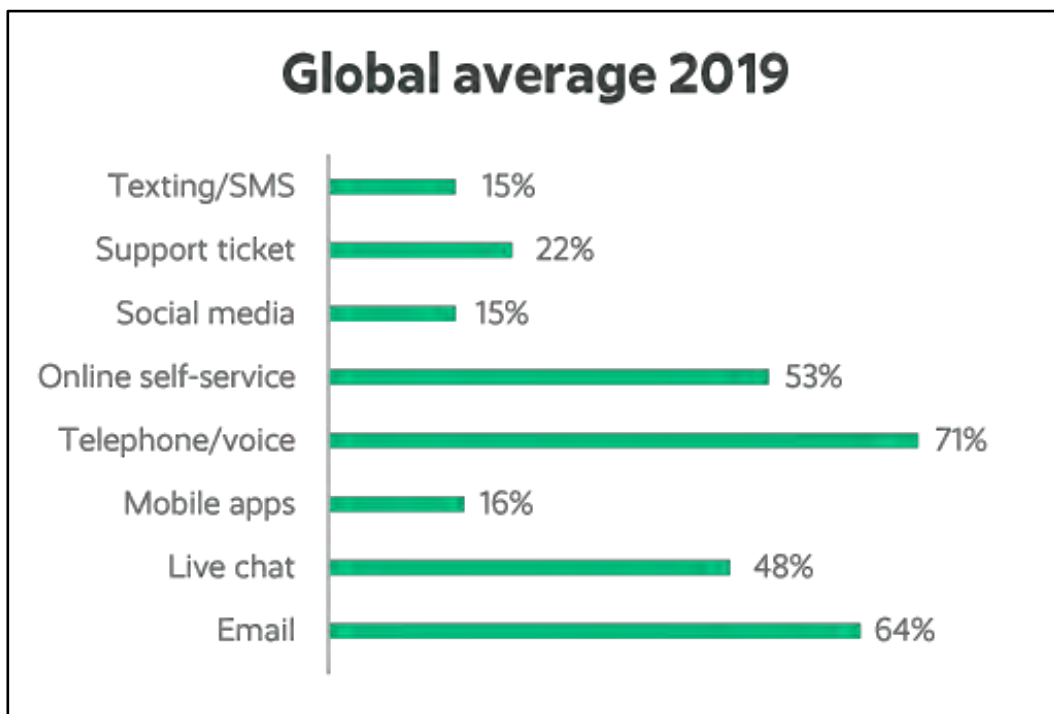
If your customers are Twitterholics, you need to have stellar social media support. If the majority of your customer base is interested in chatting with a representative before making a purchase, your website should offer a live chat feature.

By researching and learning about preferred customer service channels, you can craft a plan and focus your limited resources on offering top-notch customer support where it's needed most. But what's the best strategy for pinpointing which platforms should be prioritized?

Here are the five preferred customer service channels that every business should consider:

I. Hop on The Live Chat Trend

Thanks to the immediacy it provides, live chat has quickly gained in popularity. Microsoft's [2020 State of Multichannel Customer Service Report](#) revealed that live chat is the second-most preferred customer service channel after telephone/voice customer service for US-based respondents.



Why is live chat such a highly used channel for customer service?

An [online chat system](#) is a convenient and instant way for customers to find out information without the pain of having to dial a number and navigate through the maze of numeric options. With a live chat option, you can tap into consumers' pain points while [simultaneously increasing sales](#). By making your team available to answer questions via live chat, you can eliminate bounce rates and ensure customers make it all the way to check out.

II. Email Support Is Not Dead

Despite some rumors that email is fading away, it is still very much a part of our daily lives and is a preferred customer service channel for many consumers.

According to the Microsoft report mentioned earlier, email still ranks high in terms of support satisfaction, with 64% reporting this as a key channel. When you consider that 91% of consumers use email every single day, it makes sense they would opt for that customer support channel, especially if their query is not time-sensitive.

III. Have A Presence on Social Media Channels

In the last decade, we have witnessed the rise of consumer support via social media. Every social platform has quickly become a preferred customer service channel. More and more, people expect to find brands on their favorite social channels and expect them to be available to answer their questions and complaints.

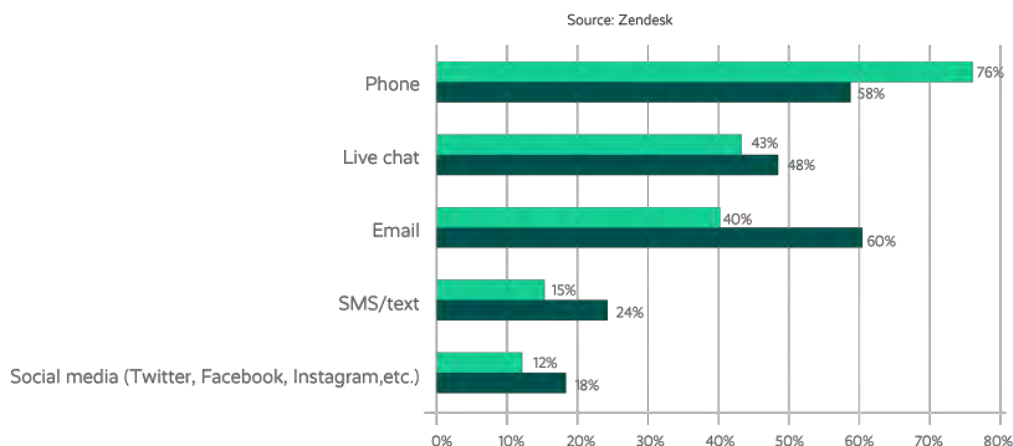
But just how important is it for your brand to offer social media support? Forty-two percent of consumers expect a response to social media questions and complaints within 60 minutes, and 32% expect a response within 30 minutes. And 72% of Millennials said they would be more loyal to a brand that responds to social media feedback. Those stats are a powerful reason to include social media in your customer service strategy.

IV. Manage Phone Support

Customer support via the telephone might sound like an old-school method. But it's not going anywhere. Phone-based customer support still ranks highly among consumers as a preferred customer service channel, with 71% rating it as a key preference.

The reason for its popularity? Half of consumers say they prefer a phone conversation when it comes to sensitive data such as financial or healthcare information. This is backed by Gartner, which shared that customers often turn to phone customer service after their attempts at self-service fail.

Complex Issues Drive Consumers To Phone Support



So while phone support may lose ground to other preferred customer service channels every year, it still has a place in your contact center options.

V. Forums or Message Boards

If you're looking for an out-of-the-box preferred customer service channel, your organization might want to consider staffing forums or message boards. Online forums give your customers the ability to come together and socialize. Think of them as the coffee shops of the internet: they're where conversation happens!

Depending on your niche, you might find that there are shared communities where many of your customers are active. These can be large forum sites like [Reddit](#) or specific ones like [FlyerTalk](#).

Once you have identified these shared communities, consider opening up a dedicated thread where customers can post support questions. Not only will your presence in these spaces allow you to stand apart from your competitors, but your customers will also have a more convenient way to contact you without having to email or pick up the phone.

Assigning your agents to these five preferred customer service channels will help your contact center increase customer loyalty and satisfaction. No matter which of your customers' preferred channels you choose, your goal should be to meet them where they are to simplify their efforts and keep them moving along the buyer's journey smoothly.

2-Receiving feedback from agent

When it comes to contact center improvement ideas, feedback and coaching should always be a top priority. Rather than giving agents feedback sporadically, why not make it part of your daily or weekly operations? Identify low volume times at your contact center and put this time to good use. Remember that feedback can be positive or negative and can come in many forms (for example, survey, scorecard or KPIs).

Receiving agent feedback is the quickest way to improve your leadership.

When you take time to hear your employees' constructive feedback, you'll gain insights into precisely what is happening within your organization at all levels, which can help you make informed decisions. Feedback also helps you prevent workplace conflicts before they happen. Receiving feedback during conflict situations is an essential leadership trait.

As a Leader, you need to lead the right conversations in the workplace. When conflicts arise, explain that gathering feedback is to discuss, not debate or take sides.

When your employees handle feedback effectively, it can foster a culture where disagreements are handled openly and directly while also being sensitive. Honest communication is key to smooth working relationships.

5 ways to collect honest employee feedback

When you collect feedback, you can offer support and realign team goals and priorities. This is what distinguishes a good leader from a great one: being open and adaptable to the needs of your team, and making employee satisfaction a priority.

So, how do you get employee feedback? There are several avenues for soliciting employee feedback, each with important benefits. Discover five ways you can collect honest feedback from your employees to improve your team's workplace experience.

How to collect employee feedback

- I. A feedback-positive culture**
- II. Honest feedback loops between management and employees**
- III. Collect employee feedback using pulse surveys**
- IV. Regular one-on-one meetings**
- V. Anonymous feedback methods**

I. A feedback-positive culture

The most successful organizations are those that foster a safe and inclusive company culture where employees can express their opinions and concerns candidly. This means being open to receiving feedback, and demonstrating that employee opinions are valued.

How to build a feedback-positive culture

- Let employees know their opinions matter: You built your team of bright minds because you believe in them. Tell employees that sharing their ideas, questions, and perspectives contributes to their collective success. Encourage them to exchange feedback among themselves and build on each other's suggestions.
- Practice being open and curious: Negative feedback or constructive criticism can feel like an attack. If you notice a defensive wall going up, ask a question or repeat what you've heard back to the other person. When people elaborate on their feedback, you both understand better what it means and how to proceed with it.
- Turn insights into action, and give credit: Find ways to implement the feedback you receive and brainstorm with employees about how you can apply it in your team's workflow. Thank your team for their input, and give employees recognition for the efforts they put into developing solutions.

How you solicit —and how you receive constructive feedback—sets the tone for your team. Lead by example and make exchanging ideas a positive, collaborative way to improve team dynamics and performance. This will amplify both the quality of the feedback you receive and how you apply it.

II. Honest feedback loops between management and employees

Workplace communication is a two-way street. For a team to thrive, management should excel at giving constructive feedback to boost efficiency, but should also master the art of how to get feedback from employees to improve the overall employee experience. By building and enabling a continuous feedback loop where comments and concerns are analyzed, you can make informed decisions to support your team and encourage innovation, productivity, and creativity.

III. Collect employee feedback using pulse surveys

Pulse surveys are one of the best ways to maintain a high-level view of what your team needs and feels in real-time. Pulse surveys let you spot fluctuations quickly and are especially helpful for remote or distributed teams where managers are at risk of losing touch with their teams. Keeping a pulse on employee happiness and satisfaction with a weekly or bi-weekly employee feedback survey helps you understand how your employees feel and stay connected with your team members by discovering sore spots before they lead to larger challenges.

How do pulse surveys work?

Employees respond to a select few targeted questions more frequently than with more traditional models like annual or even quarterly employee feedback surveys. This not only lightens the workflow for your team members, but it also provides you with more accurate insights by collecting it regularly, rather than just once or a few times a year.

IV. Regular one-on-one meetings

Connecting individually with your employees on a regular basis is fundamental to establishing a healthy and productive work environment. [One-on-one meetings](#) paint the perfect scene for giving and collecting feedback from employees and help create a feedback culture on your team. A question as simple as “what can I do to help you this week?” can reveal insights that might help you better support your team. When people are comfortable sharing their thoughts with you directly, fewer surprises arise, and you're better equipped to make adjustments when necessary.

V. Anonymous feedback methods

Anonymous feedback channels come in different shapes and sizes but all have one thing in common: they provide employees with a safe space to share their honest thoughts, questions, and ideas directly with their managers in a remote setting. Whether it's a traditional suggestion box or comments on a public review site, receiving anonymous feedback opens up conversations that might not otherwise happen between employees and managers. Do not stop short at collecting anonymous feedback—let employees know that they are heard, and turn it into a discussion. Share how you plan to act on their feedback whenever possible.

3-Coaching following a consistent routine

Contact center coaching is the key ingredient for improving agent performance and building an increase in overall customer satisfaction. Coaching contact center agents empowers them to learn new skills, receive feedback on their work, and fix any potential problems they experience during customer interactions.

With so many benefits to coaching contact center agents, it's clearly a wise strategy for growing organizations. But what is the best approach? What are best practices for contact center coaching.

Five best contact center coaching approach to build top performing agents:

- I. Contact Center Coaching Through Role Play**
- II. Make Contact Center Coaching Feedback Palatable**
- III. Use Self-Assessment When Coaching Agents**
- IV. Goal-Setting: A Motivating Contact Center Coaching Tool**
- V. Coaching Contact Center Agents Periodically**

Here we, explore how to coach an agent using these best practices, effective strategies, and techniques to propel your agents toward success.

I. Contact Center Coaching Through Role Play

One of the most impactful customer service agents coaching ideas is role play. This setting gives agents space to practice their customer service skills, in a low-pressure environment where they're free to grow, make mistakes, and find strategies that work best for them. An added bonus: Contact center coaching through role play allows for quick feedback, so they can course-correct.

Using role-play for any type of session is extremely beneficial for contact center coaching, but it's proven to be most helpful during onboarding. If new agents learn how to conduct calls during their formal training through role-playing coaching sessions, it is simple to transition the knowledge they've gained to conducting live calls.

First, take a few of the agent's first solo practice calls and replay the recording with them. Then, have the agent play the role of the customer while you play the role of the agent. In doing so, the contact center agent will get to witness how you manage the call, so they can learn from your example. Then, switch roles so they can play the agent.

It's important to understand that the agent is new at this, so they may be hesitant or come right out with a statement that's inappropriate or misleading. But within the safety of the contact center agent coaching session, you can help them find their way through a call that may have otherwise seemed intimidating. Giving your contact center agents guidance as they practice helps them learn how to think and respond like a top-performing contact center agent.

II. Make Contact Center Coaching Feedback Palatable

The next of our contact center coaching ideas is to avoid harsh feedback after an agent makes a serious mistake or shows a decline in performance. Not only are they likely nervous about what will happen during the session, but they may also fear their job is in jeopardy.

While it's important that they take the coaching seriously, fear can cause unnecessary roadblocks. You can relieve an agent's fear by using a "feedback sandwich."

The conversation can go smoothly when you approach it with examples. Start by telling the agent something they recently did very well. Give them a specific example of what they did right and explain how it benefited the customer and the company. This lays a foundation of trust and helps the agent see that they're capable of great work.

Next, discuss the problem or area of poor performance. During agent coaching, it's important to give concrete examples and explain why it matters.

Finally, do something helpful. Offer advice and next steps, or review if there's anything you can do to make their job easier. Wrap up the session by letting them know how much you value their efforts and that you're willing to provide coaching tips as they work to improve their performance.

With a coaching guide like this, your agents are more likely to take feedback to heart, and also understand the practical implications of your notes. It's a win-win for your agent and your customer experience!

III. Use Self-Assessment When Coaching Agents

You might be surprised to find out that your agents are in tune with their shortcomings, just like you are. Thanks to live customer feedback, maybe they've even pinpointed areas for improvement that you hadn't.

Research indicates that we humans may struggle to answer the “why” question about underperformance. But we're well-equipped to answer “what” questions, which shift us from subjective to objective evaluation. Translated into the QM space, successfully coaching contact center agents means asking questions like these:

- What went well on that call?
- What frustrated your customer during that engagement?
- What might you do differently next time?
- What information could you have shared with the customer?
- What resources do you need from contact center leadership to improve?

Another effective contact center coaching tool is to create a safe space in which your agents can trust you're there to listen and help them succeed. Ask them to share details about their difficulties and successes. You might learn something you didn't know before, either about their performance, their attitude about it, or what they've already tried to improve.

With this information, you'll be ready to help them work on their problem areas and fine-tune their performance, while simultaneously showing them that their opinions and observations matter.

IV. Goal-Setting: A Motivating Contact Center Coaching Tool

Another successful practice for agent coaching in a contact center is motivating agents to constantly progress forward. Goals and benchmarking are fundamental motivational tools for providing an extra push.

During the coaching sessions, work with your agents to define actionable goals they can work toward. By establishing and agreeing on goals with your contact center agents, you'll help them shift their sights to a plan that is attainable.

When you help your agents establish goals, you set a strategic trajectory towards future achievement. Research indicates that setting actionable goals empowers employees to reach new heights.

A contact center coach should use a smart reporting tool to track agents' performance metric progress and measure how much they've improved within the set period of time — and don't forget to set new goals as you benchmark for the upcoming period.

V. Coaching Contact Center Agents Periodically

Periodic sessions for coaching agents are crucial to their success. Periodic coaching sessions can also serve as feedback sessions and give agents space and time to put their new learnings into effect while setting new deadlines. It also allows them to look back and reflect on their growth over time.

As a contact center coach and manager, be sure to review agents' yearly performance indicators and identify their greatest strengths. Find where they are continuously having problems. Then, find concrete examples of each.

During the coaching session, talk to contact center agents about ways to improve their weaknesses. They may have ideas on how to learn, but you also need to be ready to provide your own suggestions.

Don't forget to recognize and showcase their achievements, too. Knowing where they're being successful not only helps them feel appreciated, but it also ensures they stay on a positive path.

Top-performing agents aren't born, they're made. It takes a special commitment to your team to give them the coaching tips they need to learn, develop their skills and correct any problems holding them back. But the investment in coaching contact center agents is well worth it and can result in a true ROI for your organization and its customer experience. By using these contact center coaching tactics, you can provide agents with what they need in order to thrive in your busy contact center environment!

4-Follow Up Coaching by Tracking Improvements

Agents who are told what they're doing wrong and approached in a negative manner are likely to become resentful toward the QA system and its players. Their only goal quickly becomes to stay off of your radar, which is unproductive when improving quality is your ultimate objective. Genuinely coaching an agent proves that they invest in you, boosting motivation and attrition.

Contact centers are the front line of customer service! So it's crucial to have your finger on the pulse of common contact center problems to solve them effectively.

What are the challenges of a contact center agent?

Nearly everything an agent does creates a stressful situation that they're forced to manage. A decrease in contact center performance levels and customer satisfaction, Average Handle Time, low morale, and so many other factors put pressure on agents. And an overreliance on traditional metrics often make it difficult for agents to improve because they ignore quality, overwork agents and ultimately lead to decreasing performance.

Effective contact centers are certainly placing more importance on their customers, but sometimes forget to check in on their own staff. In fact, KPIs such as customer satisfaction (CSAT) are more commonly used than employee satisfaction (ESAT). According to a recent survey by ICMI, nearly half of respondents don't track employee satisfaction within their contact center.

Solution: Focus on Non-Traditional Metrics

Focus on qualitative and quantitative metrics, such as real-time customer feedback, balanced scorecards and Net Promoter Score, which all work to further improve performance levels. Happy agents are more likely to lead to happy customers, after all!

5-Investing in Smart Software

Technology has the potential to streamline the customer experience, while simultaneously reducing the burden and stress on your agents.

For details, please see the **Information sheet 4.4.2 Contact Center Technology: Best Return on Investment (ROI)**



Self-Check Quiz – 3.2.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: Which 5 approaches to implement your action plan to improve your quality scores?

Question 2: Which five preferred customer service channels that every business should consider?

Question 3: Which 5 ways to collect honest agent feedback?

Question 4: Which Five best contact center coaching approach to build top performing agents?



Answer Key – 3.2.1

Answer 1: Here are 5 approaches to implement your action plan to improve your quality scores:

- 1-Monitoring all channels**
- 2-Receiving feedback from agent**
- 3-Coaching following a consistent routine**
- 4-Following up Coaching by Tracking Improvements**
- 5-Investing in Smart Software**

Answer 2: Here are the five preferred customer service channels that every business should consider:

- I. Hop on The Live Chat Trend**
- II. Email Support Is Not Dead**
- III. Have A Presence on Social Media Channels**
- IV. Manage Phone Support**
- V. Forums or Message Boards**

Answer 3: Following 5 ways to collect honest agent feedback:

- I. A feedback-positive culture**
- II. Honest feedback loops between management and employees**
- III. Collect employee feedback using pulse surveys**
- IV. Regular one-on-one meetings**
- V. Anonymous feedback methods**

Answer 4: Following Five best contact center coaching approach to build top performing agents:

- I. Contact Center Coaching Through Role Play**
- II. Make Contact Center Coaching Feedback Palatable**
- III. Use Self-Assessment When Coaching Agents**
- IV. Goal-Setting: A Motivating Contact Center Coaching Tool**
- V. Coaching Contact Center Agents Periodically**



Information Sheet – 3.2.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to identify opportunities for improvement.

CONTACT CENTER PROCESSES: How to Continuous Improvement

Content Summary:

What is Contact center Operational Efficiency?

The Importance of Contact Center Processes Improvement

10 Contact Center Processes Improvement Techniques:

1. Develop a Strategic Contact Center QA Framework
2. Focus on Your Net Promoter Score (NPS)
3. Omnichannel Efficiency Tips
4. Optimizing Contact Center Agent Workflows
5. Develop an Effective Contact Center Management Team
6. Implement Contact Center Agent Feedback Loops
7. Contact Center Agent Training and Learning Tips
8. Craft a Good Script
9. Improve Average Handle Time and Other Key Metrics
10. Remote Contact center Efficiency Tips

Whether you are running a small help desk or a large group of customer support agents, ensuring high-quality customer experiences must be at the very top of your list of priorities. Customers want an instant, reliable service that communicates with them on their chosen channel or platform. Your contact center operational efficiency needs to be at peak performance, or you risk customer dissatisfaction.

In this session, we talk about what contact center operational efficiency and how to establish a culture of continuous improvement.

What is Contact Center Operational Efficiency?

Contact center operational efficiency refers to the ability of a contact center to maximize its productivity and profitability while maintaining high levels of customer service. It involves optimizing the use of resources, including technology, staff, and processes, to ensure that customer inquiries are handled quickly and efficiently. **Some of the key components of contact center operational efficiency include:**

Effective staffing: Contact centers must have the right number of agents available to handle customer inquiries. Overstaffing can be costly, while understaffing can result in long wait times and frustrated customers.

Streamlined processes: Efficient contact centers have streamlined processes in place that enable agents to handle inquiries quickly and accurately. This may include using automation to handle routine inquiries or using scripts to guide agents through more complex inquiries.

Performance metrics: Contact centers must track and measure performance metrics such as call wait times, call resolution rates, and customer satisfaction scores to identify areas for improvement and optimize operations.

Technology: Contact centers must have the right technology in place to handle customer inquiries efficiently. This may include using chatbots and AI-powered assistants to handle routine inquiries,

providing agents with access to customer information across multiple channels, and using data analytics to optimize operations.

By improving contact center operational efficiency, businesses can reduce costs, increase revenue, and improve customer satisfaction. It allows them to handle customer inquiries more effectively, reduce wait times, and provide a more personalized and responsive customer experience.

Defined, operational efficiency is the ratio of output gained from your business (profit, revenue, cash) as input (operating costs, people, and time/effort). The more efficient your business, the more profitable you are. You can get the same return (revenue) with lower costs and effort.

According to a recent survey of 1,300 global CEOs, 77% say their primary focus is creating operational efficiencies and driving revenue growth. They recognize that making processes run smoothly will improve their business impact and translate into external customer experience improvements.

The Importance of Contact Center Processes Improvement

Boosting your contact center's operational efficiency is not an overnight feat. It requires taking a good hard look at the metrics of your contact center and recognizing areas for improvement. By reevaluating your QA framework and gauging where your agents are lacking, you will be able to invest the time and resources needed to improve your contact center's processes drastically.

Every day and week, your contact center carries out hundreds of processes—everything from handling customer interactions to inputting time cards, attending meetings, training, etc. To measure contact center operational efficiency, you have to measure both the amount of effort you put in as well as what you get out of it. For example, you would have to measure how long your agents spend on customer calls versus the customer satisfaction you get out of it. Or you must measure time spent training versus the benefits—cash and otherwise. And those are just two small pieces of the puzzle.

Minor improvements in almost any contact center process can increase significant efficiency. You have to identify the tasks and areas of your contact center that can be the most quickly and easily improved.

10 Contact Center Processes Improvement Techniques

To help you out, we have come up with a list of 10 contact center process improvement techniques. These operational efficiency tips will help you gain greater profits and customer satisfaction. These are:

2. **Develop a Strategic Contact Center QA Framework**
3. **Focus on Your Net Promoter Score (NPS)**
4. **Omnichannel Efficiency Tips**
5. **Optimizing Contact Center Agent Workflows**
6. **Develop an Effective Contact Center Management Team**
7. **Implement Contact Center Agent Feedback Loops**
8. **Contact Center Agent Training and Learning Tips**
9. **Craft a Good Script**
10. **Improve Average Handle Time and Other Key Metrics**
11. **Remote Contact center Efficiency Tips**

1. Develop a Strategic Contact Center QA Framework

Developing a thriving contact center Q, A framework is paramount to improving customer experience and building brand loyalty: contact center success and productivity hinges on evaluating agent performance accurately and using that information to improve CX.

A strategic QA framework will help you evaluate agent performance and training, collaborate effectively, understand the customer experience, and increase operational efficiency. The challenge is implementing the right technology and systems to collect data without the need for significant resources.

To be able to look at the big picture, there are eight questions you need to answer:

1. **Who defines quality** (customers, regulators, leadership, etc.)?
2. **For which outcomes** (performance, compliance, improvement, innovation)?
3. **From what inputs** (surveys, evaluations, analytics, self-scoring)?
4. **What drives quality** (processes, systems, needs, self-managed)?
5. **Who gets involved** (leadership, QA team, analysts, agents)?
6. **Why get involved** (recognition, reward, career benefits)?
7. **How is quality improved** (performance management, coaching, training)?
8. **What is a success** (metrics, behaviors, feedback, NPS)?



A Strategic Quality Framework chart by Martin-Hill Wilson, the founder of customer service and customer experience consultancy, *Brainfood*. A strategic QA framework is less about micromanaging and understanding and respecting your agents and management team.

2. Focus on Your Net Promoter Score (NPS)

The ultimate goal of your contact center is to provide positive customer experiences. But you can't do this without first evaluating how successful you are at helping your customers. That's why your Net Promoter Score (NPS) is critical. It can help you operationally, tactically, and strategically. Your NPS is the gold standard for measuring customer experience and customer loyalty. Your goal should be to make Promoters (a score of 9-10) of as many customers as possible. If you do this, you could outgrow your competition by 2.5 times and expand your revenue by 24%.

So, how do you implement and improve NPS? There are seven steps:

1. **Measure QA as part of your daily operation** to streamline and adjust your processes as needed.
2. **Listen to customer calls** and evaluate each interaction for what works and what doesn't for the optimal outcome.
3. **Engage with your customers and ask for feedback**, whether they are Promoters, Detractors, or Passives.
4. **Identify poor-performing agents** and provide regular training, coaching, and advising.
5. **Deliver consistent service** by setting attainable benchmarks that are measurable and easily translatable, and shareable.

6. **Remove silos in the contact center** that require customers to move from one department to another to gain their assistance.
7. **Implement your strategic quality assurance framework**, which we discussed above.

3. Omnichannel Efficiency Tips

According to a recent study of contact centers, 55% use at least seven channels in their customer experience (CX) programs. But unfortunately, only 13% are delighted with their ability to use data to manage customer interactions. You must ensure consistency and personalization of interactions across all channels, where adequate omnichannel support is critical.

Providing personalized customer service should heighten the overall contact center experience. To drive customer engagement and provide authoritative solutions, customers need to be routed to the correct person who can assist them—both in terms of knowledge about the type of question the caller inquires about and possessing the right authority to help the caller.

If customers are sent to the wrong department and need to be redirected multiple times, traffic becomes congested and slows the whole contact center down. They are segmenting customers by streamline the right customer to the right agent. This will improve customer satisfaction by pairing the customer with a skilled agent who can officially get with their query.

Follow these omnichannel best practices to get started:

- **Implement contact center technology** to facilitate customer engagement in real-time. CRM software is essential to break down typical department, channel, and system silos.
- **Empower agents to be authentic and relevant** across channels by training them in soft skills such as tone of voice, empathy, and willingness to listen.
- **Personalize the customer experience via channel** by using customer data to keep track of customer history and provide consistent interactions.
- **Implement planning and routing strategies** to dynamically match customers from any touchpoint, over any channel, to the right agent to help.
- **Perform regular QA across channels** using a quality scoring system to measure all aspects of the customer experience.

4. Optimizing Contact Center Agent Workflows

According to a [study conducted by Aberdeen](#), agents spend 14% of their time looking for information to help customers. Agents also [face roadblocks and struggle](#) when it comes to:

- The ability to collaborate (39%)
- Outdated technology and infrastructure (26%)
- Lack of budget to update technology and processes (25%)
- Turnover of high-performing agents (25%)
- Lack of real-time access to relevant data (25%)

Worse yet, 74% of contact center agents are at risk for burnout, and 30% are at severe risk. So, optimizing your workflow is necessary for contact center agents to handle customer support with positive results effectively.

There are several ways you can optimize your contact center workflow.

- **Develop an organizational chart** that will help you determine who is responsible for what, what tools are available, and how customer service inquiries are assigned.
- **Prioritize support** by deciding how you'll answer support tickets—either on a first-come, first-serve basis or based on channel, task, and customer.
- **Categorize inquiries** by segmenting your customer service requests by type and category: marketing, development, sales, IT, etc.
- **Enable self-service** by providing your customers with answers to their most common questions via a knowledge database.
- **Analyze data** by setting KPIs that you'll use to track productivity and agent performance.

- **Test different approaches** to contact center workflow, constantly asking for feedback from your agents, customers, and management to improve efficiency.

5. Develop an Effective Contact Center Management Team

Unfortunately, most companies (77%) are currently experiencing a leadership gap. They don't have a solid management team to accomplish even the most basic tasks: hiring, satisfying customers, and increasing profits. This means that many contact centers flounder when setting objectives, crafting goals, and providing reliable, efficient, and effective practical both staff and customers.

To change this, first and foremost, your contact center needs to hire contact center managers that are exceptional communicators, detail-oriented, and possess a deep understanding of customers, agents, and service.

In particular, there are several skills and habits that all contact center managers need:

- **Customer Service:** They are the first and last line of defense for satisfaction.
- **Empowerment:** Leaders who empower their employees are engaged in driving success.
- **Employee Monitoring and Training:** Managers must be able to track employee performance, identify issues, and develop training to solve performance issues.
- **Communication:** Leaders must be able to inspire, motivate, and persuade.
- **Problem-Solving:** A manager's role is to proactively reduce conflict and solve problems.
- **Integrity:** Managers must demonstrate ethical behavior, including honesty, integrity, and morality.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Leaders must create a positive culture and improve the customer experience through empathy and likability.
- **Data-Based Decisions:** They must be able to establish goals and objectives based on KPIs designed for making better decisions.
- **Technologically Advanced:** They keep up-to-date with the latest contact center technology to implement new resources.

If you hire and train the proper contact center management, you should have a leadership team that increases productivity, maximizes efficiency, and promotes cost-effectiveness. They'll solve problems, look at the bigger picture, analyze data, and lead your contact center toward achieving its goals.

6. Implement Contact Center Agent Feedback Loops

Empowered employees are associated with more robust job performance and job satisfaction. They are also more committed to reaching their goals, demonstrating initiative, and providing exceptional customer service. And one of the best ways to empower your agents is to not micro-manage them but instead implement self-evaluating performance tools for a feedback loop. The key is to create a contact center quality feedback loop that works by creatively using scorecards.

- **Use scorecards that don't only focus on customer success.** Instead, use contact center agent review to incentivize productivity by linking performance metrics to business goals. For example, use scorecards to discuss soft skills, processes, compliance, and outcomes.
- **Reward employees and drive them to work harder** with positive feedback, verbal acknowledgment, and monetary compensation. The key is to reward each agent with what they want most.
- Promote productivity and improved employee performance with **gamification of agent feedback**. Combine scorecards with fun activities that provide a context for interpretation.
- **Ask questions of your agents**, including how they're doing day-in and day-out. You can use questions to develop your agents' critical eyes, improve self-assessment, and provide a more hands-on management style.

7. Contact Center Agent Training and Learning Tips

To boost contact center operational efficiency, you need to create a training program focused on handling complex tasks and decisions. The most successful programs are built around contact center quality assurance processes. This framework helps you develop specific objectives and outcomes for each training session based on clear and measurable performance insight.

Unfortunately, only 65% of companies provide practical tools for training. A contact center learning management system (LMS) is essential. An LMS will help you train and educate your agents by automating the training process with a centralized software solution designed to manage, track, and achieve your learning goals.

Using an LMS for your contact center agent training will positively impact your call quality outcomes and operational efficiency by:

- Providing **efficient and effective employee onboarding**, both formal and informal.
- **Tracking and scoring QA metrics** to see how well your training improves performance.
- Improving **employee retention** through internal development opportunities.
- **Developing learning content** to address performance and efficiency gaps.
- Nurturing learning through **one-on-one engagement** and compelling coursework.
- **Measuring contact center improvement with reports**.
- Incentivizing and **rewarding agent improvements** through gamification.

8. Craft a Good Script

A versatile contact center script can contain the solution to many customer queries. It allows for faster handling of calls and ensures that information is accurately explained to the customer.

However, it's important to note that customers prefer calls that *sound* unscripted and personal and solve superior problem-solving skills. There is nothing more frustrating for a customer than calling a company to resolve a problem and feeling that they are not being heard. Sixty-nine percent of customers say they hate it when a contact center agent reads from a script.

Customers want more than anything to speak to a customer service agent that is both knowledgeable and friendly. That means your agents need more than just a good script; they also need solid and soft skills and empathy—these are essential tools for an agent to utilize when responding to customers' queries.

So, how do you craft an **effective contact** center script? Follow these 15 best practices, which you can read more about here.

1. Hire suitable contact center agents that know when to use a script.
2. Get to the point quickly and efficiently.
3. Train agents on how best to use the script.
4. Make adjustments to your script until it sounds natural when read aloud.
5. Focus on sounding authentic and conversational.
6. Make your scripts personal.
7. Drop the false empathy.
8. Turn your scripts into knowledge resources
9. Keep things simple
10. Don't forget the basics: customer greetings, words to avoid, etc.

11. Write multiple scenarios and paths into the script.
12. Go beyond apologies and make the situation right.
13. Allow for growth and development in your script and agents.
14. Review the scripts of your competitors.
15. Track the success of your contact center scripts for customer satisfaction.

9. Improve Average Handle Time and Other Key Metrics

For contact center performance to improve, it first must be measured. While average handle time (AHT) is one metric that could be lowered to improve contact center efficiency, AHT shouldn't be the sole focus as reducing call quality, and customer experience will hurt the company's overall brand.

Instead, you need a quality assurance process that looks at a critical contact center and customer experience metrics. Many KPIs are available on everything from productivity to sales, customer satisfaction, and quality. We recommend breaking it down into three sections:

- **Business Critical Metrics** deal with developing a documented approach to QA and the customer experience, ensuring higher performance and continuous improvement.
- **Critical Customer Metrics** focuses on the customer experience and how well the agent understood the customer's problem and provided a solution.
- **Process Critical Metrics** review what happened after every customer interaction and offer detailed notes in the CRM.

To improve these metrics, capture and share best practices within your contact center . Don't just focus on what not to do; highlight what works well.

10. Remote Contact Center Efficiency Tips

Remote contact center agents face many more challenges than in-office agents. They can feel disconnected, struggle with delayed communication, lack resources, easily get distracted, and feel that there's little trust, accountability, transparency, and feedback. To overcome the struggles of remote contact centers:

- Create a learning and development strategy and content focused on improving productivity in a remote workplace.
- Build trust with your remote agents by communicating regularly, empowering your agents to do their work, engaging regularly, and providing consistent feedback.
- Hold one-on-one video calls using Skype, Zoom, or Google Hangouts to create a more personal connection.
- Institute remote contact center tools to promote efficiency, including remote collaboration tools (Slack, Google Drive), productivity tracking (Status Hero, Toggl), and quality assurance monitoring.

The key to a thriving remote contact center is to track the success of your agents. You need a tool that can tell you how your agents handle every customer interaction and if their performance is meeting your expectations.

There are so many contact center monitoring platform that is entirely customizable. You can dig deep, carry out a root-cause analysis, identify training gaps, discover broken processes, reveal common pitfalls, and find the key to agent success. You can also set up as many contact center QA forms as you need to evaluate calls, review emails, monitor chat, check social media, etc. It's a powerful analytics tool that makes it easy to spot trends and expectations within your center, so you can determine what training is needed to improve operational efficiency.



Self-Check Quiz – 3.2.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: Why Need Continuous Processes Improvement in a Contact Center?

Question 2: Which are the 10 Contact Center Processes Improvement Techniques?

Question 3: Which 3 sections we categorized as Contact Center KPI?



Answer Key – 3.2.2

Answer 1:

Boosting your contact center's operational efficiency is not an overnight feat. It requires taking a good hard look at the metrics of your contact center and recognizing areas for improvement. By reevaluating your QA framework and gauging where your agents are lacking, you will be able to invest the time and resources needed to improve your contact center's processes drastically. Minor improvements in almost any contact center process can increase significant efficiency. You must identify the tasks and areas of your contact center that can be the most quickly and easily improved

Answer 2:

To help you out, we have come up with a list of 10 contact center process improvement techniques. These operational efficiency tips will help you gain greater profits and customer satisfaction. These are:

1. Develop a Strategic Contact Center QA Framework
2. Focus on Your Net Promoter Score (NPS)
3. Omnichannel Efficiency Tips
4. Optimizing Contact Center Agent Workflows
5. Develop an Effective Contact Center Management Team
6. Implement Contact Center Agent Feedback Loops
7. Contact Center Agent Training and Learning Tips
8. Craft a Good Script
9. Improve Average Handle Time and Other Key Metrics
10. Remote Contact center Efficiency Tips

Answer 3:

Contact Center KPIs breaking down into three sections

- **Business Critical Metrics** deal with developing a documented approach to QA and the customer experience, ensuring higher performance and continuous improvement.
- **Critical Customer Metrics** focuses on the customer experience and how well the agent understood the customer's problem and provided a solution.
- **Process Critical Metrics** review what happened after every customer interaction and offer detailed notes in the CRM.



Learning Outcome 3.3 - Handle and resolve contact center escalation



CONTENTS:

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS: Why it's Important? How to Handle?

CONTACT CENTER ESCALATION: Strategies to resolve.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Ways to handle call escalations are demonstrated.
2. Customer requirements are identified.
3. Methods to improve complaints handling in Contact Center are described.
4. De-escalation Techniques are applied to handle an Angry Caller.
5. Skills and diplomacy are applied to ensure customer satisfaction.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ingredients and relevant materials
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities
- Paper and Pen



Learning Activities – 3.3

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
3.3 Handle and resolve contact center escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 3.3.1 to 3.3.2 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 3.3.1 to 3.3.2 ▪ Answer Key: 3.3.1 to 3.3.2



Information Sheet - 3.3.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session the trainee will identify the importance of customer complaints and be able to handle them properly.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS: Why it's Important? How to Handle?

Content Summary:

What are Customer Complaints?

Why Customer Complaints are Important?

The 11 Methods for handling customer complaints that have proven to work successfully:

1. Offer consistent support across multiple channels
2. Practice active listening skills
3. Automate your customer support with bots
4. Use the right tools & processes to manage complaints
5. Handle customer complaints proactively
6. Go the extra mile to keep customers happy
7. Record important customer complaints
8. Be polite while dealing with complaints
9. Document your customer issues
10. Put yourself in your customer's shoes
11. Keep your customers updated

Every business has to be customer centric to sustain in the competitive market. Investing in customer support will help businesses to understand their complaints and improve their services and experience.

There is always a silver lining to the customer complaints. Smart businesses recognize the importance of customer complaints and consider it a golden business opportunity. However, complaints are inevitable, no matter how hard you work or how great your products are, no business can satisfy its customers all the time.

Research by American Express says that “78% of customers have given up on a transaction because of a negative customer experience” The best way to ensure your business growth is to know what your customer complaints are and treat them as highly valuable feedback to instill in the customer service strategy to improve your brand experience.

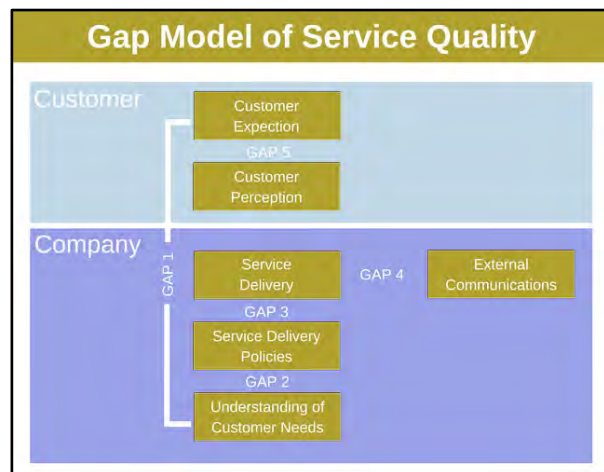
Before we comprehensively discuss the impact of customer complaints on businesses, let us know what does it mean and what are the advantages for business.

What are Customer Complaints?

Customer complaints can be defined as the gaps between what business promises in terms of the product or services and what customers get. It is a mismatch between how customers perceive the brand and where they fail to get the desired customer service experience.

There could be different types of customer complaints. It could be related to a) improper communication, b) internal processes or c) poor quality of service. Realizing that a complaint is an opportunity makes it easier to turn conflict into positive change. Customer complaints can tell you how to resolve issues – if you listen to them carefully.

You should be thankful to your customers for sharing their opinions and complaints. It helps to understand the challenges customers are facing with your products and services. They are very valuable to your business because not only do they help you gauge the level of consumer perception but also unveil so many unexpected opportunities for growth.



Importance of Customer Complaints to your Business

We need to shift our thinking about complaints by seeing the real value that comes with it. We should encourage them as there are certain important advantages of customer complaints. They have a significant impact on the business. So, by understanding the benefits of the complaints you not only improve your brand face value but increase your team productivity

Complaints give a firsthand perspective of how your customers feel. Instead of doing expensive market research or running a feedback survey, customer complaints are actually the real feedback that you can get if you address them carefully and implement those changes. By realizing the importance of customer complaints, evaluating business areas becomes direct and easy.

Let us discuss 7 reasons why customer complaints are important for your business growth:

1. Complaints are a reality check for your business

“Why are customer complaints good for your business?” – The answer is quite simple.

Generally, **customers do not prefer doing business with that company again after one negative experience.**”

It is critical to pay maximum attention to customer complaints. Businesses that don't define their objectives get stuck without solid goals and customer complaints can help to identify ways to take businesses to the next level. It acts as a reality check for the businesses and helps them to plan strategies for growth and development. Troubleshooting the complaints by evaluating the concerns help to improve your business as well as customer experience.

Here are how customer complaints can benefit your business.

- Help to identify the loopholes of service delivery.
- Gain insights about customers' perception for your brand.
- Learn about the most desirable features and how you can build better products.

Acting on customer complaints regularly helps to deliver a consistent support experience and it also makes every business department accountable to resolve them.

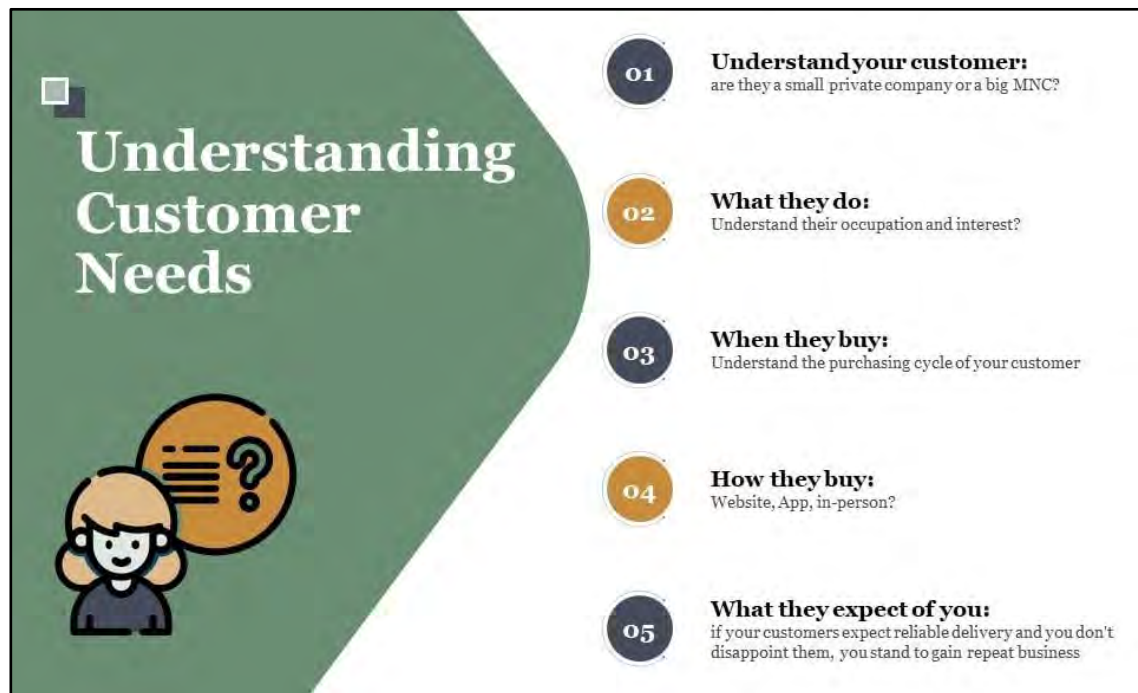
2. Understand customers better

Knowing and understanding customer needs is the focal point of every successful business. The more you know about your customers, the more effective will be your sales and marketing efforts. Making the effort helps to gain insights into your products and services. Once you have the knowledge of the benefits and drawbacks, it can be used to persuade potential and existing customers that your brand is the best for their interests.

Understanding customers can be vital for the following reasons:

- Gain insights on who they are, what are their interests, what they think about you that can help you to structure your approach meeting their expectations.

- Learn their psychology and use it to improve your products and services.
- The easier you make things for your customers, the more likely they are to retain your brand over others.



No matter if your customers reach out to you with minor or major concerns, you should ignore them. Rather you should apply it to match the wavelength of the customers with your brand. Handling the challenges properly will help customers feel that brands value their complaints.

3. Get first-hand feedback about your products & services

When customers have a bad experience with your brand, they might not tell you but certainly, share with their friends and colleagues. Harvard Business Review found that the **act of just asking for customer feedback is enough to keep customers from churning and coming back for more.**

Acquiring first-hand customer feedback opens growth opportunities for businesses. Encouraging customers to complain and share their opinions is an easy way to share their genuine feedback. It is one good reason why customer complaints are important.

Here are the key reasons why customer complaints or feedback are good for your business?

- **Points out important aspects that need improvement** – It is vital to understand what suits better to your customers. Feedbacks help you to know if your product is close to what they desire. When you show that you are listening to them, brand credibility improves.
- **Customers complaints can be used to sell products** – Unhappy customers who provide feedback should be seen as a chance. When they contact you and share the bad experience, expecting you to do something about it, give priority to the feedback.
- **Listening to customers makes them feel valued** – A good way to show your customers that they are important is by asking for their opinion and acting accordingly. When the customers feel listened to, they start having positive connotations with your brand and share their good experiences with you.
- **Genuine feedback generates recommendations** – Forbes study revealed that personal recommendations are the top motivation for purchase decisions. It generally comes from friends or family and can be even more convincing.

4. Manage your online reputation

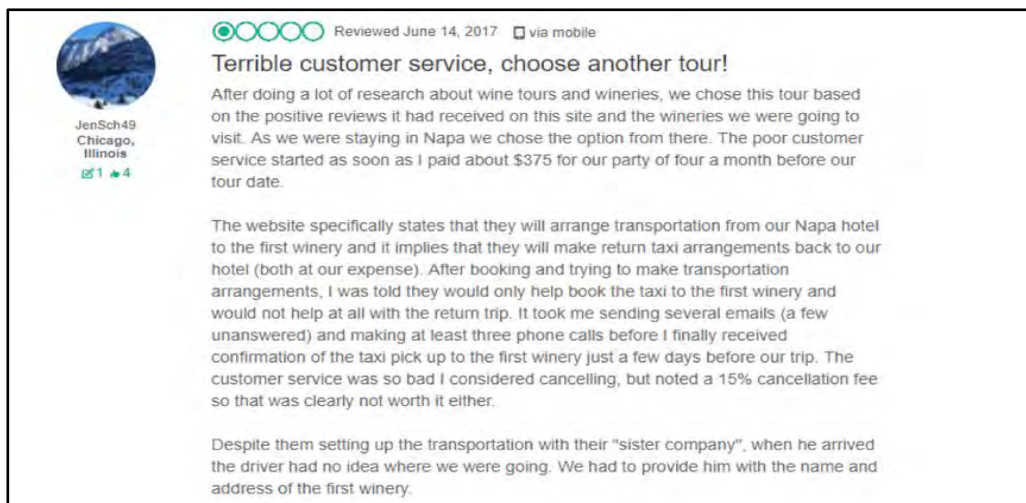
Podium survey found that **93% of consumers are influenced to purchase by online reviews**. This is why marketers give more importance to online reputation and reviews. What customers say about your brand online directly impacts your bottom line.

Managing your brand reputation online is not about removing the negative reviews and complaints from the social channels. It is all about being active 24×7, putting the right efforts to reduce the negative reviews while keeping the customers satisfied at the same time.

Quick tips to manage online reputation:

- Respond to online reviews and customer complaints as quickly as possible.
- Maintain a polite tone while conversing with the customers.
- Never take the reviews personally while dealing with them.
- Apologize. A sincere apology can diffuse the situation and may gain a loyal customer.
- Gain insights to understand your brands' performance and your target audience better.

Wine Country Tour Shuttle serves a good example to handle angry customers with polite responses. You can see how fantastically the manager responded to the customer complaint.



By taking timely actions to an angry customer, your response can appease the direct customer as well as other customers who might read these complaints and assess your competence to handle tough queries.

Takeaways:

- You should monitor your brand mentions regularly to understand what customers are talking about you.
- Be prompt in addressing the negative reviews so that it does not connect to the bad word of mouth.
- If a customer was really angry for a genuine reason, once you fix it, you can incentivize them to compensate.

5. Improve your customer support

Why do customers complain so much?

May be due to reactive support channels the response may be delayed and multiple customer touchpoints or interactions are needed to resolve a complaint. Sometimes customers complain because their "frame of reference" does not necessarily line up with the product or service that is offered. If your support team does not have the proper skill set, the process is inadequate or your team is not equipped with the right tools.

If you are not able to handle your conversations on time and effectively, then you can implement the right tools such as:

- **Live chat** – You can implement [live chat](#) to deliver instant assistance to customers' complaints related to sales or support and improve satisfaction. Make sure your agents are well trained on how to deal with angry customers and to diffuse situations.
- **Real time engagement tools** – Tools like [co-browsing](#) and video chat help to connect with customers in real time to identify customer problems faster and deliver effective solutions.
- **Chatbot** – You can automate your sales and support with [chatbots](#) to engage customers 24×7. Responding to customers' issues instantly delivers a better experience.

When the customer complaints are related to improper skills of the team, you can respond to them by providing additional training related to products, services, and solutions. It will help the agents to enhance the knowledge to resolve customers' queries productively.

6. Enhance customer communication

[McKinsey](#) report says **70% of the customer's journey is dictated by how the customer feels they are being treated**. Generally, customers move to other brands because they are put off by an untrained or rude support team. Effective communication plays a vital role in resolving customer complaints.

When customers make a complaint, it is a hidden opportunity for your business to improve, which is why customer complaints are good for business. When customers see you listening and taking their feedback into account, they appreciate that their voice was heard.

Practice healthy responses for resolving customer complaints:

- **Listen to your customers** – Listen to what your customers are complaining about. You have to identify the reason why they are complaining. Customers expect faster responses and listening helps to understand them and answer them quickly.
- **Find an effective solution** – Empower your customer support team to respond to customer complaints by avoiding them from transferring them to senior managers.
- **Follow up with the customers** – After offering solutions you can follow up with your customers to make sure they are happy with the resolution or not. Following up shows that you care for your customers.
- **Meet and exceed customer expectations** – Never miss out on a chance to meet or exceed your customer expectations, even in situations where you intend to say no to customers. You can send a thank you or provide early access to new features.
- **Apologize your customers** – You can calm down a frowning customer with a sincere apology. Always say sorry for your mistake if delayed to acknowledge or resolve the customer complaint.

7. Build customer loyalty

“Our greatest assets are our customers. Treat each customer as if they are the only one.”

Thus, every customer complaint impacts businesses. Whether it is about a product or service is positive or negative, the business is impacted by it. A satisfied customer may share their experience with limited friends, while a dissatisfied customer may get on social media and share their experience with thousands of followers.

Resolving negative comments is vital but how to respond to customer complaints?

- Acknowledge the issue and let your customers know that you are looking into the matter.
- Provide an estimated timeline and follow up action.
- If the customer is happy in the end, you can ask them to share his positive feedback.

By responding to your customer complaints in a timely manner, you can make them feel valued and happy. Effectively handling customer complaints is important as it is a make-or-break point for customer loyalty.

How to Handle Customer Complaints

Customer complaints are inevitable for any business. At some point, every business has to deal with unhappy customers. But the biggest challenge is how to handle customer complaints in a way that leaves the customers thinking that they are valuable. Not all the time complaints are a wrong sign.



91% of customers who are unhappy with a brand will leave without complaining.

Realizing the importance of customer complaints can unveil golden opportunities for businesses while ignoring their issues is a kind of disregard for them and they might leave for a lifetime. So, take the complaints into priority and effectively fix them as soon as possible.



Often, a negative experience can be salvaged and turned into an opportunity. Being capable of how to deal with customer complaints is key to making this happen practically. You can even encourage them to serve as loyal advocates for your brand.

How businesses handle complaints helps to determine their success or failure. Businesses can analyze the complaints to find out the masked opportunities for building closer relationships with customers, which will eventually help them to prosper.

Methods & Best practices to handle customer complaints

27% of customers report “lack of effectiveness” as their number one frustration with customer service. Customers might not continue doing business with you if you provide ineffective service and are not able to fix their issues in the first go. However, you cannot stop customers from complaining but you can certainly be well prepared to deal with it.

Here are the 11 Methods for handling customer complaints that have proven to work successfully:

1. Offer consistent support across multiple channels
2. Practice active listening skills
3. Automate your customer support with bots
4. Use the right tools & processes to manage complaints
5. Handle customer complaints proactively
6. Go the extra mile to keep customers happy
7. Record important customer complaints
8. Be polite while dealing with complaints
9. Document your customer issues
10. Put yourself in your customer's shoes
11. Keep your customers updated

Let us now discuss how to handle customer complaints effectively by understanding the value it provides to your business.

1-Offer consistent support across multiple channels

Customer journeys have become convoluted. Customers have abundant choices to share their feedback and complaints with you across various channels. **The companies that delivered strong omni-channel customer engagement retained 89% of their customers.**

Adopting an omni channel communication approach to handle customer complaints consistently across channels such as web, social, phone, email, etc. The main goal is to integrate all the outreach and communication channels under one platform to eliminate siloed engagements.



If you offer prompt support over the phone and email and ignore the other channels the support will not be consistent. So, you should think of omni channel strategy. You need to assure your customers of consistent and real time support across all channels.

Here is how to deal with customer complaints via omni channel support strategy:

- Resolve and reduce the number of complaints as customers can reach out to you across various channels.
- Proactively engage your customers to help them before any confusion occurs to be a problem.
- If there are any issues or outages, you can use channels such as Twitter or Facebook to broadcast to your customers.

Domino's serves as a great example of dealing with customer complaints and creating the right experience across all channels and devices. It operates 14,000 stores in more than 85 countries around

the world and gets more than [50% of its sales through digital channels](#). Domino's omnichannel reach is across Email, Messaging, In-app, Social media, Facebook Messenger, Dom (AI Bot), and Bricks & Mortar stores.

2. Practice active listening skills

When was the last time you actually listened to what customers were saying — and addressed their complaints in broader terms with your customer service team?

HundredX, a company that develops feedback software for enterprises, surveyed more than 500 business executives and found that 94% believed **—Listening to customer feedback is increasingly critical to the bottom line.**"

For businesses to listen to the voice of the customer, they must first know **how** to listen actively to customers' complaints without getting defensive. Active listening might sound simple but it is an art in real terms.

Active listening is when you are sharing your thoughts with someone and you are being heard with the right understanding and cues.

How to handle customer complaints by listening to them?

- Listening to customers is a great way to gather genuine feedback about your business. You can use the feedback data to guide your business and marketing decisions.
- Having active listening skills helps you to connect with customers and will leave them feeling satisfied and understood. Being heard is a priceless feeling. Active listening could be the key to averting upcoming business problems.
- Responding to the customer complaints and concerns validates that you understand they are ready to resolve their problems.

Note: You should not get defensive as if a customer is complaining about your product, possibly other customers might be experiencing similar challenges.

3. Automate your customer support with bots

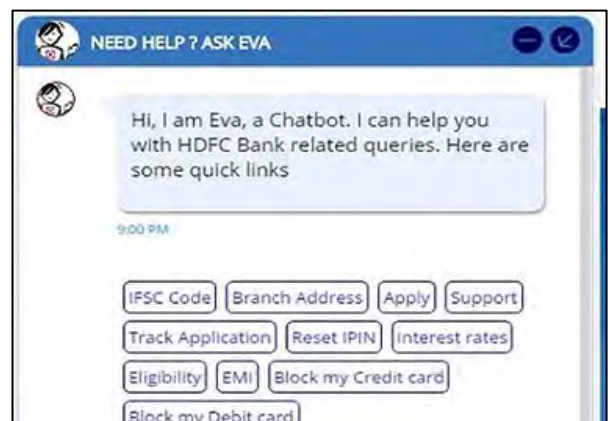
Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed the approach of how businesses manage customer complaints. [Microsoft](#) says, **30% of US customers rate chatbot interactions as —very effective— in dealing with customer service issues.**

Customers expect their problems to be responded to immediately. Delayed responses can make customers angry and they end up posting negative business reviews online. However, you must understand the [pros and cons of chatbots](#) if they are helping to fix issues rightly.

Automating your customer support with AI enabled [chatbots](#) is a good way on how to handle complaints or queries in real time.

How chatbots can help to deal with customer complaints?

- **Provide instant solutions** – Bots can deliver real time solutions to the issues reported by the customers, thus reducing the number of support tickets raised.
- **Always active** – Chatbots are 24×7 active to engage customers and provide instant answers when your support team is unavailable.
- **Easy scalability** – You can scale chatbots easily deal with complaints and queries reported by customers.



The HDFC Bank's EVA (Electronic Virtual Assistant) banking chatbot can help to explain better. Eva uses the latest in AI and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to understand the customer query and fetch the right information instantly.

Eva has already answered more than 5 million queries from around a million customers with more than 85% accuracy. Eva holds more than 20,000 conversations every day with customers worldwide.

4. Use the right tools & processes to manage complaints

One important aspect of the customer complaint handling procedure is to make a shift from traditional ways to digital ways of responding. The main essence of complaint management lies in using the right tools & processes. It determines how efficiently the complaints are being solved.

Using a specific set of tools and processes helps to respond timely and monitor them to take proactive actions. You can follow the customer complaint management processes for your business to resolve issues faster.

Processes

- **Issue escalation-** Identify the nature of the complaint and escalate to the right team or agent for faster and effective resolution.
- **Define KPIs** – With well-defined KPIs like resolution time, response time to ensure that customers get faster resolution in minimum wait time.

Tools

- **Ticketing system** – Having a help desk system helps you to manage, track and monitor customer complaints and resolve them effectively
- **Live chat** – Live chat helps to connect with the customers in real time to solve sales & support issues effectively.
- **Customer feedback** – Collect customer feedback regularly across channels and fix them proactively before they turn to complaints.

5. Handle customer complaints proactively

The web enables customers to share their feedback both positive and negative across multiple channels such as in forums, social media networks and more. This indicates that you need to get proactive in handling complaints.

You can categorize the frequently reported complaints or analyze what sort of problem the customers might encounter and based on that you can prepare solutions beforehand. The solutions can be in various forms such as:

- Support content
- How-to videos
- FAQs
- Tutorials

The ready-to-use solutions will proactively help customers to solve the issues at their own end. Singapore Airlines is the best example with such support content curated for baggage-related queries.

Singapore Airlines is easing one of the most common issues customers face during travel i.e. checked baggage. The comprehensive authentic information on baggage helps the queries answered faster.

Class of travel	To/From USA	PPS Club members	KrisFlyer Elite Gold / Star Alliance Gold members
Suites and First Class	2 pieces, up to 32kg each	2 extra pieces, up to 32kg each	1 extra piece, up to 32kg each
Business Class	2 pieces, up to 32kg each	2 extra pieces, up to 32kg each	1 extra piece, up to 32kg each
Premium Economy Class	2 pieces, up to 23kg each	2 extra pieces, up to 23kg each	1 extra piece, up to 23kg each
Economy Class	2 pieces, up to 23kg each	2 extra pieces, up to 23kg each	1 extra piece, up to 23kg each

6. Go the extra mile to keep customers happy

Once responding to the customer complaints and resolving them, you have to take the customer relationship a step further. Excellent customer service is a key attribute that many customers value more than the price or quality of the product.

What can you do to show you value your customers? You can make them feel special or surprise them by doing something they could not expect.

Here are some ways you can make your customers feel valued or important.

- Provide coupons
- Incentives
- Offer discounts for next purchase
- Send a personalized thank you email



KROSS, a Polish company that is known for bicycles and bike frames set a great example of going the extra mile for three young boys, who decided to earn and save money for their dream bikes on their own. The positive attitude of the boys moved the entire country as well as the company that they got new bikes.

7. Record important customer complaints

At times, customers come up with complaints that require comprehensive discussions and undivided attention to understand the concerns. In such scenarios, you can record the conversations after asking for the consent of your customers.

Recording customer service conversations can turn out to be very helpful to provide you better understanding by reading between the lines. How do recording chats help in handling customer complaints?

- It helps your agents to review the recorded conversation to get a better understanding of complaints and find effective solutions to resolve it.
- The recorded conversations help to know the key improvement areas of your business.
- Recording calls help you to not miss out on any crucial aspect that can help to solve the complaints.

When you listen to the recorded calls, it helps you to identify where exactly things went wrong and understand how to handle customer complaints.

8. Be polite while dealing with complaints

When a customer approaches you with a complaint, keep in mind that the issue is not personal. You need to be patient in listening to what your customer is saying without interrupting in between and politely acknowledge it.

Tips on how to handle customer complaints:

- Be careful not to speak scripted replies, but use this as an opportunity to start a genuine conversation, building a trusting relationship with your customer.
- Do not use a negative tone or words while conversing with your customers.
- Do not argue or get defensive while your customer is talking about the problem.
- Make your customers feel that you are on their side by empathizing with the situation.

When customers sense that you are sincerely sorry, it usually diffuses the situation. Don't put the blame on any other person or department. Just say, "I'm sorry about that."

The bottom line is that you have to extend your vision and see the value of customer complaints camouflaged and make the best out of it.

9. Document your customer issues

"Your unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning." It's important to keep detailed records of these complaints to help you improve your product or service. You will want to be able to look back and identify consistent complaints that need to be resolved."

Bill Gates

The best part of complaints is that it brings in hidden opportunities for building stronger products and services. When customers report their issue for the first time and get it fixed successfully in the first touchpoint, you need to record the resolutions for future use.

Why is the recording of customer complaints responses is vital?

- By creating a process of customer complaint procedure you can help customers to resolve similar problems in the future. You also set a perfect example of how to handle customer complaints.
- You can record all the resolutions in an online document, over email, web, or offline. The main goal is to offer these solutions to those customers who reach out to you with similar issues. If the solutions are available it will help to get answers in time.

10. Put yourself in your customer's shoes

You get one step closer to creating the perfect customer experience by putting yourself in your customer's shoes. What happens when you think like a customer? There is a shift in the viewpoint and the entire focus streamlines in creating value.

Keeping yourself at their place helps you to understand how exactly they are feeling to encounter the problem with your product or service. Just think – if you were on the receiving end of their experience, would you personally be satisfied?

You might deal with complaints on a regular basis, and may well have handled a similar situation before. However, for the customer, their complaint is unique.

Pro tips to deal with complaints:

- Treat your customers as important individuals by listening to their problems from beginning to end attentively. It is one of the best ways to handle customer complaints.
- If you stay positive throughout, avoiding negative or dismissive comments, then the result will likely be positive too.
- You should be optimistic with the customer that you can find a solution to the issues they raise with you.

11. Keep your customers updated

Generally, businesses miss out on keeping their customers updated and make a follow-up with them. Customers get annoyed when they make a complaint and never hear from your side. This gives them a feeling that you do not care for them and prefer silently leaving your brand. This might negatively impact your brand.

Problems will continue to happen. It is about how honestly you acknowledge and deal with the complaints. Customers will remember you, and happily give you another chance to delight them when you solve their problems with the very best you can offer, proving you value them and their business.

How you resolve customer complaints, make follow-up shows your concern, and make them feel an important part of your business. Going further they become your loyal customers and brand advocates. Such customer complaint management procedures should be followed by businesses to achieve long-term success.

Best practices on handling customer complaints:

- You can provide your customers with an estimated timeline to reply back, to keep customers informed. It will assure them that you are looking at their issue and they will get a quick solution.
- Once the resolution is over successfully, make sure you follow up with your customers. You can measure customer satisfaction by asking them how happy they are with the solution.
- If the complaint is not understood clearly in the first touchpoint use live tools like co-browsing or video chat to identify the issue faster and deliver effective solutions avoiding multiple contacts.

Final Thoughts

Customer complaints are a blessing in disguise. The main advantage of customer complaints is that you can get to know the genuine gaps and improve your products or services in the right direction.

However, the way you handle a complaint is the difference between gaining or losing the customer. So, the next time you receive a customer complaint, listen to what the customer empathizes with them, find a feasible solution, and follow up to see if they are happy with the way you handled their complaints.

In doing so, you are on your way to creating more loyal customers, improving your product, and delivering a better quality of customer service.



Self-Check Quiz – 3.3.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What are the types of Customer Complaints??

Question 2: Which are the 7 reasons that customer complaints are important for your business growth?

Question 3: Which are the 11 methods for handling customer complaints that have proven to work successfully?



Answer Key – 3.3.1

Answer 1:

There could be 3 types of customer complaints. It could be:

- a) improper communication,
- b) internal processes or
- c) poor quality of service.

Answer 2:

Following 7 reasons that customer complaints are important for your business growth:

- Complaints are a reality check for your business
- Understand customers better
- Get first-hand feedback about your products & services
- Manage your online reputation
- Improve your customer support
- Enhance customer communication
- Build customer loyalty

Answer 3:

Here are the 11 Methods for handling customer complaints that have proven to work successfully:

1. Offer consistent support across multiple channels
2. Practice active listening skills
3. Automate your customer support with bots
4. Use the right tools & processes to manage complaints
5. Handle customer complaints proactively
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Information Sheet - 3.3.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session the trainee will be able to apply techniques for call escalation and how to handle it in contact centers.

CONTACT CENTER ESCALATION: Strategies to resolve

Content Summary:

What Does Call Escalation Mean?

What are the Different Types of Escalation?

Why Reduce Escalation in Contact Centers?

How to Manage Call Escalation in a Contact Center?

10 De-escalation Techniques to Handle an Angry Caller:

- 1 Stay Calm
- 2 Pick Your Words Wisely
- 3 Let the customer tell
- 4 Consider your way of speaking
- 5 Try not to put them on hold
- 6 Be honest in providing information
- 7 Stay positive
- 8 Use a script
- 9 Optimize technology
- 10 Make the customer satisfied

What Is an Angry Caller Policy and How to Establish?

Many customers who are dissatisfied with the level of service ask contact center agents, “May I talk to your supervisor?”

Given the nature of customer service, escalation calls are unavoidable. It is, however, critical to ensure that it does not spiral out of control. They also should be handled immediately. Finally, this guide provides you with the most practical information and tools for call escalation and how to handle it in contact centers.

What Does Call Escalation Mean?

Suppose a junior agent transfers a call to a senior one at the customer’s request; this is called an escalated call. When customers are unsatisfied with the service in a contact center, they request to escalate the call to someone at a higher level to resolve their issue.

A contact center agent may not have the necessary knowledge to address all of the customer’s concerns. So, they escalate the call to higher management for customer service resolution. During escalation calls, all contact center service providers have senior specialist resources to handle calls and resolve issues. Escalations must be treated seriously, and contact center managers must treat customers’ calls and problems respectfully, or they risk losing a potential buyer.

Companies that provide help desks constantly develop practical strategies to reduce escalated calls successfully. These are many reasons why a customer requests escalation or transfer of calls to a company’s senior-level officials. According to the studies, many customers escalate calls due to an agent’s lack of understanding and confidence.

However, before answering and delivering a resolution, service providers must urge agents to listen to the consumer’s questions carefully. If agents are unsure about the solution, they should seek assistance from their superiors rather than offering incorrect responses.

What are the Different Types of Escalation?

Predictive behavioral routing is a contact center tool that links customers with the agent who is most likely to solve their problem. There are four primary escalation techniques if the remote agents fail to give the required support. Let us get to them:

1. Hierarchical Call Escalation

It is the most common type of call escalation, and it is structured hierarchically. It goes from lower-level to higher-level agents. The support ticket is forwarded to the appropriate agent based on their seniority and experience with similar issues.

A supervisor could escalate the problem to an account manager, who would then escalate the matter to the head of sales.

2. Functional Escalation

Even if they are not hierarchically next in line, a ticket will be sent to a person or team with a similar skill set needed to resolve the essential concerns.

For instance, the accounts and billing department would be the best unit to deal with issues and questions about an upcoming payment.

3. Priority Call Escalation

In this type of escalation, the issue is escalated according to its priority and delivered to team leaders and higher levels sooner.

An Information Technology issue that causes frequent phone echoing, for example, will be given higher importance than investigating a supply delivery that is a day late.

4. Automatic Escalation

Companies use contact center software to move project problems to the next level when a specific time passes without a resolution.

Why Reduce Escalation in Contact Centers?

The contact center agents may prevent over 80 percent of call escalations on the first call. So the ideal circumstance is no supervisor escalation calls or fewer of them. Managers and team leaders of contact centers must focus on high-level duties like coaching, training, and performance analysis when they usually spend time chatting with a customer about an issue that might have been fixed on the first call.

Supervisor escalations have an impact on the **First Contact Resolution (FCR)** rate as well as other necessary customer service measures like the **Average Handle Time (AHT)** and **Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)**. A disappointed customer is more inclined than a happy customer to submit a negative review about the organization. For example, a company may lose business if it is identified with poor customer service.

According to studies, almost 90 percent of customers are more likely to make a second purchase after a good customer service experience.

How to Manage Call Escalation in a Contact Center?

Call escalation cases are usually urgent, so contact centers should have robust procedures, systems, and protocols to assure a positive conclusion.

The Eight practical procedures for handling escalated call-in contact centers are outlined below:

1. Do Not Make Assumptions

Contact center managers are sometimes prone to forming opinions based on what their agent says about a customer issue. Managers subconsciously categorize the customer as **“one of those difficult types”** if the agent thinks the consumer is not ready to listen or is challenging to deal with. Making these kinds of assumptions is one of the fatal blunders to avoid when dealing with an escalated call. Consider the client to be someone who has a problem and is misbehaving since your initial customer service work has not been able to solve it. It makes you more likely to solve the problem. Frequently, escalated calls occur due to the first customer service representative’s lack of knowledge or experience in dealing with the problem.

Handle the call with a good attitude and be prepared to soothe the upset customer before dealing with the problem.

2. Recognize the Problem

Managers should encourage employees to convey the facts about the problem straightforwardly and objectively because it is critical to have all the information when dealing with call escalation. Try to recognize the customer's issue or problem, the impact of the problem on them, and the existing solution. This information helps you determine why the call was escalated to a higher level and what to do in future cases.

3. Have Clear Objectives

While on an escalated call, you must be clear about objectives. Most managers usually have two primary objectives: resolving the problem and handling the customer effectively. When you have finished the call, jot down exactly what needs to be done to resolve the problem. Next, describe how you want the consumer to feel about the brand and the company, the solution you have supplied, and how you have resolved the problem.

4. Demonstrate Sympathy for the Customer

Mentally prepare yourself to take the call. Introduce yourself appropriately at the beginning of the call. Send a good message to the customer expressing that your goal is to resolve their problem. Tell the customer that you have been briefed on the problem, but do not go into specifics. Instead, allow the customer to fill you in on the information.

5. Allow the Customer to Talk

Take the call with an open mind, and do not assume the customer is in the same irritating mood as before.

By the time you picked up the phone, they may have cooled down, allowing them to describe the problem in-depth. After listening to the entire problem, write a summary of your take on the topic. It reassures the customer that you understand their problem and desire to help them.

6. Present the Solution

Make your move to provide the proper answer to the problem once you have completed all the above procedures. By this point, the consumer is willing to listen to you, and there will be a better possibility for both sides to reach an agreement. Confirm the customer's agreement with the solution before closing the case.

7. Use AI-Assisted Solutions

Artificial intelligence technologies can help you to manage escalated calls. For example, you can handle routine calls with conversational AI apps or virtual assistants. Call analysis using AI contact center systems can assist detect inefficiencies or blockages that lead to supervisor escalations. The AI solutions may perform better regarding balance inquiries, transfers, and other recurring Tier 0 and Tier 1 requests that may discourage agents. To provide a seamless support experience and eliminate caller frustrations, the AI can reduce wait times and work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

8. Improve Efficiencies in Contact Center

Managers and supervisors at contact centers should be on the lookout for inefficiencies that lead to escalated calls. Customers may be disappointed and impatient when connecting with a live agent if they wait a long time. Customer support agents usually complain about the slow systems. Investing in automated contact center management software may be a good solution for this problem. To prevent unwanted functional escalated calls, it may be required to assign greater authority or permissions to agents.

Call protocols and an inability to comprehend customers' requirements can cause operational inefficiencies. It is also a good idea to build up a call escalation or backup team specifically trained to deal with escalation.

Contact centers may require contact center escalation protocols or an escalation matrix that instructs agents on who to contact or which departments to contact with specific escalated calls.

In Summary, implementing new training for contact center agents and building a straightforward remote worker escalation process improves customer service. Investing in the proper project management and contact center software can also help avoid call escalation and misunderstanding regarding the project goals.

De-escalation Techniques to Handle an Angry Caller

As a contact center representative or manager, chances are you probably receive an angry phone call at least once a day. It could be an irate caller complaining about a bill. Or even an angry caller getting frustrated about call times (with 75% of customers believing call waiting times to be too long, this is probably a regular issue). Whatever the reason, it can be a frustrating experience all around.

When spoken to rudely and aggressively by irate customers, it can be hard to be polite and helpful in response. However, if a call isn't handled well, there is a high chance that the customer won't return. If this happens daily, that is a lot of non-returning customers. And a lot of revenue missed out on.

Of course, it can be difficult to push through the negativity. But it is very possible! With the right training, tools, and software, every phone call can be a great phone call, meaning contact center agents can handle calls with grace and decorum every time.

De-escalating an angry phone call leads to customer satisfaction, which in turn leads to a more productive call, shorter handle times, great customer service, and overall better results.

10 Ways to De-escalate an Angry Phone Call

So, to avoid any negativity, here are 10 different ways that angry phone calls can be de-escalated and handled using good customer service.

1. Stay Calm

It's no good if both the caller and contact center staff are getting angry. So, the first thing that needs to be done when dealing with an angry phone call is to stay calm. Remember, angry phone calls aren't personal. It's annoying, but the customer is just aiming their anger at whoever happens to pick up the phone. Therefore, a representative must do what they can to remain calm and give an angry caller customer service that will turn their frown upside down.

A good tip is to try and deal with an issue before it gets worse. Not taking things to heart will enable people to deal with the problem effectively.

2. Pick Your Words Wisely

You and your staff should always think about how you would like to be spoken to and the words that you would like to hear. For example, if you are speaking to an angry woman, the last thing she will want to hear is you saying: *–Alright, calm down, love!* Not only is this patronizing and sexist, but it will just make her even more wound up. A good idea is to consider the personality type of the customer and use the language suited to the scenario. An angry businessman or businesswoman, for instance, must be dealt with differently from an irate consumer. Some people just want someone to vent to. They probably have a lot going on in their personal life. Unfortunately for you, that unexpected bill from your company is the thing that tipped them over the edge.

Here, it's important to respond using empathetic language.

Try responding with phrases like: *“I’m sorry you feel this way,”* Or: *“May I suggest ...”*

A customer with a legitimate problem has a reason to be annoyed at your company. Your firm is in the wrong and needs to acknowledge this and take them seriously. Therefore, the language used for this angry phone call should again be empathetic and apologetic.

Try saying things like: *“I’m so sorry to hear about this.”* Or: *“I will action this for you right away.”*

Dealing with an abusive customer can be particularly hard. Nobody should be expected to put up with angry customers being openly unpleasant to them. However, you should still try to calm the client down. Professional language should always be used in this scenario and the emotional side of things should also be understood.

Try saying: *“I understand your concern, but we don’t tolerate the kind of language you are using.”* Or: *“You seem very upset; would you like to continue this conversation through email?”*

When dealing with an angry phone call, it's best to use positive language. Such as *–yes*, *–definitely*, *–understand*, and *–recommend*. All of this will help give the customer a positive experience.

3. Let the Customer Talk

Often, all a customer wants to do is get things off their chest. For whatever reason, they feel they have been wronged and they want to rant. Let them do so.

It might even be that a situation has become a bit complicated and they just need a chance to get things clear in their heads. Nobody likes being interrupted or second-guessed. So, just let them get their point across.

Granted, it can be a bit hard to catch what a person is saying if they are on a cell phone or are speaking to you from a coffee shop. Therefore, it's a good idea to make notes where possible and let the person talk.

Of course, if they are a difficult customer, then there may be a point that they need to be cut off. But otherwise, try to listen to what they are saying. Once they have calmed down, ask them questions that will help get to the root cause of the issue.

4. Consider Your Way of Speaking

The tone of voice can be everything when dealing with an angry caller. Overly gentle and it can come across as patronizing. Not gentle enough, and it can seem like you don't care. Making either of these mistakes can exacerbate the situation. Having a steady and calm voice will help calm things down. Apologizing when needed will show that you take the situation seriously. And using a soft tone will show empathy to the situation.

Remember to always stay neutral when talking to customers. Part of angry caller customer service is never to respond to rude comments in kind. A man screaming down the phone won't react well if you yell back.

It's really important never to mock a caller. Angry or not. Because in any scenario, that's just rude.

5. Try Not to Put Them on Hold

As a customer call agent, it can be very tempting to put angry callers on hold. Nobody wants yet another angry phone call to ruin their day. Some even believe going on hold will give the person a chance to calm down.

But putting a frustrated person on hold can just make the situation worse. It leads to people feeling like they are being ignored. Some might even feel that agents are complaining about them. It's a bit like the contact center way of saying: "Talk to the hand." Basically, in their eyes, you aren't listening to them and you seemingly don't care. Instead of putting them on hold, use the phone conversation to let them know what you are doing to deal with the problem. As contact center staff, it's your job to offer them support. Let them know you do care.

6. Be Honest

Honesty is the best policy. We all know that.

Part of dealing with customer calls is telling them what is going on. Put yourself in their shoes. If you called a company with an issue, you would want to know what was *really* going on. If there has been a mistake made at your end, tell them. If they can't return a product because they broke it, tell them. Even if you don't know an answer, it's okay to say so. As long as you let them know that you can find the answers at some point. Don't mislead them for the sake of niceties.

7. Stay Positive

Do you remember when you were a child and had a tantrum? Then an adult would try and make you laugh. No matter how grumpy you tried to stay, you couldn't help but crack a smile? Staying positive around bad-tempered customers is a bit like that. Because positivity is contagious. Eventually, the customer's negativity will disappear, and the situation can be resolved.

8. Use a Script

When handling an angry call, it might just be easier to go off a pre-written script to de-escalate things. After all, you probably use a script when making a call in general. So why not in this scenario? Part of angry caller customer service means that you know what to say in response. So, going off a script gives you a better chance of saying the right thing. Even just having a few phrases or bullet points to jump off from will help provide great customer service for the highest number of people possible.

9. Optimize Technology

Technology has an answer for everything nowadays. This includes dealing with angry customers. Whether you are using an answering service or offering a solution to get more calls answered, this will help take the pressure off workers. This means that agents will be less stressed and can deal with angry phone calls better. Even something as simple as recording software will help with training purposes and protect staff.

10. Make the Customer Happy

It would be great if we could reward the nice customers that really made our day. But the reality is, they are already on our side. And we want all of the customers to fall into that category. That includes the angry ones. So, to do this, we must solve their problems and improve their mood. Some solutions may include:

- **Going the extra mile** – It doesn't take much to see if there is anything else you can help with.
- **Offer a voucher** – This just shows that you appreciate their business.
- **Make them smile** – Ending the conversation with a compliment or a joke will help people de-stress on both ends.

Even after putting these solutions into place, sometimes the customer still isn't happy. As a good employer, it's important to create an angry caller policy so that the staff knows how to deal with disgruntled customers.

What Is an Angry Caller Policy and How to Establish?

An angry caller policy protects both customers and staff. It's basically a policy that is put in place to deal with an angry caller and for agents to know what steps to take with such a customer. It helps your staff to know how to respond in each scenario and know when the time is right to cut them off. A business needs to put a policy in place that draws the line between anger and abuse.

For example, a customer saying they are frustrated is different from a customer swearing and name-calling.

The policy also needs to train staff on how to handle these kinds of calls. Agents should never accept any derogative or discriminative terms. Or any threats of violence. Setting an angry caller policy means setting boundaries and training staff.

Some suggestions on how to establish this are through:

- **The three-strike rule** – This means giving two warnings to the customer before cutting off an angry phone call. Of course, this should be done in a diplomatic way and as a last resort. But if the agent has tried to work alongside the customer and they just aren't playing ball, it's time to say goodbye.
- **Let managers listen to the call** – Having people with more expertise listen to an angry call can help. They know when it's appropriate to cut things off, and can help agents learn for the future. It also lets staff know they are respected in their job.
- **Make a follow-up call** – Of course, you want to support your staff when they deal with a bad customer. But even if a client is having a (very) off day, you don't necessarily want to lose custom with them. It can have a bad impact on your brand, to say the least. Having a follow-up call can help mend any ties.
- **Know how to deal with repeat offenders** – Unfortunately, there will always be people that keep on abusing staff. The first time, they can be forgiven. But the fourth time? Well, perhaps then it's time to tell them to never call again. You may need to create another policy to add to your angry caller policy to decide how to deal with this issue.
- **Finding alternative solutions** – Perhaps a customer is finding it hard to express themselves. Giving them the choice to write things down and communicate via email will mean that you aren't having to deal with any angry outbursts.

There are other points that you might want to add to your policy. Such as redirecting calls to experts or simply dropping the customer from your company. A policy will help establish how far is too far and how much you need each customer. However good it is to have customers, it's also important to keep staff. So, make a policy that makes your employees want to stay.

Final Thought

Unfortunately, contact center staff will have to deal with angry phone calls. However, using the above de-escalation techniques will help calm the situation down, leaving both agents and customers in a happier place. Putting a policy in place will ensure that angry customers don't take things too far and the staff knows where the limits lie.

Knowing how to deal with angry calls will give your company a better reputation, and provide customers with a better experience, encouraging them to keep on coming back.



Self-Check Quiz – 3.3.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What does call escalation mean?

Question 2: What are the different types of escalation?

Question 3: Which are the Nine practical procedures for handling escalated call-in contact centers?

Question 4: Which De-escalation Techniques apply for Angry Phone Call?



Answer Key – 3.3.2

Answer 1:

Suppose a junior agent transfers a call to a senior one at the customer's request; this is called escalated call. When customers are unsatisfied with the service in a contact center, they request to escalate the call to someone at a higher level to resolve their issue.

Answer 2:

There are four primary escalation techniques if the remote agents fail to give the required support. Let us get to them:

- 1-Hierarchical Call Escalation
- 2-Functional Escalation
- 3-Priority Call Escalation
- 4-Automatic Escalation

Answer 3:

The Nine practical procedures for handling escalated call-in contact centers are outlined below:

1. Do Not Make Assumptions
2. Recognize the Problem
3. Have Clear Objectives
4. Demonstrate Sympathy for the Customer
5. Allow the Customer to Talk
6. Present the Solution
7. Use AI-Assisted Solutions
8. Improve Efficiencies in Contact Centers
9. Use Dynamic Internal Knowledge

Answer 4:

10 Ways to De-escalate an Angry Phone Call

1. Stay calm
2. Use your words wisely
3. Let the customer tell
4. Consider your way of speaking
5. Try not to put them on hold
6. Be honest in providing information
7. Stay positive
8. Use a script
9. Optimize technology
10. Make the customer satisfied



Learning Outcomes: 3.4 Generate and Analyze Report



CONTENTS:

CONTACT CENTER ANALYTICS: Reporting & analysis



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Segmented data from relevant sources is collected.
2. Collected data is analyzed using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software.
3. Report is prepared as per requirement.
4. Report is shared with authority.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ingredients and relevant materials
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities
- Paper and Pen



Learning Activities – 3.4

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
3.4 Generate and Analyse Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 3.4.1 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 3.4.1 ▪ Answer Key: 3.4.1



Information Sheet - 3.4.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session the trainee will be able to analyze performance at the end of each WFM cycle and provide reports to contact center leadership.

Reporting & analysis

Content Summary:

What is reporting & analysis?
Why does reporting & analysis matter?
How does reporting & analysis work?
What impact does reporting & analysis have?

What is reporting & analysis?

Reporting and analysis in a contact center refer to the process of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data related to the contact center's operations and performance. This data can include information such as call volumes, wait times, call handling times, customer satisfaction scores, and more. By analyzing this data, contact center managers can make informed decisions about staffing, processes, and technology to improve efficiency, productivity, and customer satisfaction.

Some common types of reporting and analysis in contact centers include:

Performance reporting: This involves tracking and analyzing key performance indicators (KPIs) such as average handle time, first call resolution rate, and abandonment rate to measure the contact center's efficiency and effectiveness.

Customer satisfaction reporting: This involves collecting and analyzing customer feedback through surveys, feedback forms, and other channels to measure customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

Operational reporting: This involves tracking and analyzing data related to the contact center's operations, such as call volumes, wait times, and agent availability, to optimize staffing and resource allocation.

Trend analysis: This involves analyzing data over time to identify trends and patterns that can inform decision-making about staffing, training, and technology investments.

Overall, reporting and analysis are essential components of contact center management, as they provide valuable insights into the contact center's performance, customer behavior, and areas for improvement. By leveraging these insights, contact center managers can make data-driven decisions to improve efficiency, productivity, and customer satisfaction.

In order to continuously improve, contact centers need to analyze performance at the end of each WFM cycle and provide reports to contact center leadership. Outsourcing centers are usually contractually required to provide reports to their clients.

Why does reporting & analysis matter?

Even when you forecast accurately, schedule efficiently, and do a great job of real-time management, things can still go wrong. Planners learn from failure as much as from success, so it's important to analyze the results, perform a root cause analysis, and put in place the changes needed to improve performance in the next cycle. Plus, reports are really useful to team leaders during appraisals and 1:1s with their agents.

Reporting and analysis are critical in the contact center for several reasons:

Identifying areas for improvement: Reporting and analysis can help contact center managers identify areas where the center can improve its performance, such as reducing wait times, improving first call resolution rates, and increasing customer satisfaction scores.

Improving efficiency and productivity: By tracking and analyzing key performance indicators such as call handling times and agent utilization rates, contact center managers can optimize staffing and resource allocation to improve efficiency and productivity.

Enhancing customer experience: By collecting and analyzing data on customer interactions, feedback, and satisfaction, contact center managers can identify trends and patterns that can help them better understand customer needs and preferences, leading to a more personalized and positive customer experience.

Driving business growth: By leveraging data insights to optimize operations, contact center managers can help drive business growth by improving customer retention, increasing customer lifetime value, and attracting new customers through positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Demonstrating value to stakeholders: Reporting and analysis can help contact center managers demonstrate the value of the center to stakeholders such as senior executives and shareholders by showcasing the center's impact on business outcomes such as revenue, profitability, and customer satisfaction.

Overall, reporting and analysis are essential in the contact center as they provide valuable insights that can inform decision-making, improve performance, and drive business growth. By leveraging data to optimize operations and enhance the customer experience, contact centers can differentiate themselves in the marketplace and achieve long-term success.

How does reporting & analysis work?

Data is available from various sources, e.g.

- The tool used for WFM, e.g. a spreadsheet or WFM application
- The ACD or other contact routing platform
- The CRM system

The data is typically consolidated using a business intelligence tool or a spreadsheet. The goal is to automate the collection of the data and then apply templates to create reports which are required on a regular basis.

The KPIs that are usually analyzed and reported on are similar to those tracked in real-time management but with a different time frame applied. In real-time management, planners aim to detect deviations from plan in time to take corrective action on the day. Reporting takes a longer perspective, typically the length of the planning cycle, for example, one month.

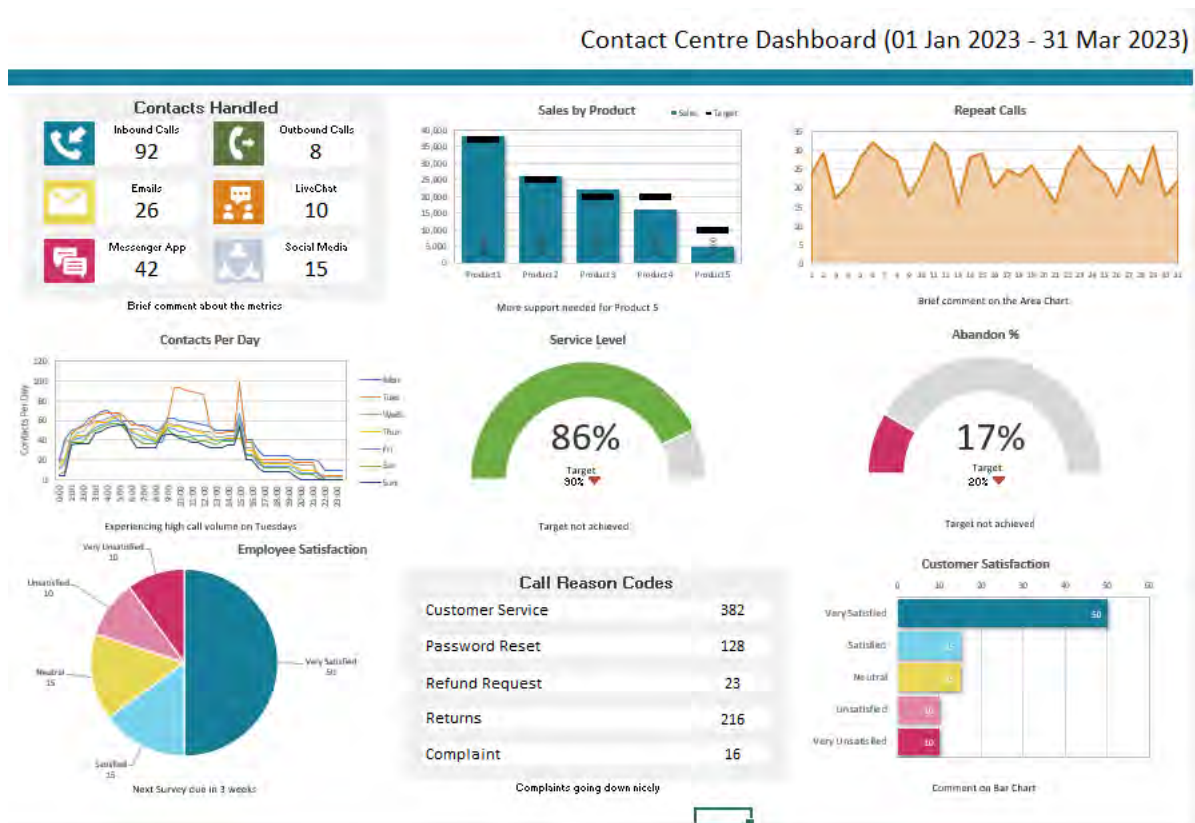
Four groups of KPIs are used to track and improve WFM performance:

1. Forecast accuracy, i.e. how closely the forecast values for volume and AHT matched reality.
2. Schedule efficiency, including coverage (i.e. under/overstaffing), occupancy and utilization
3. Operational effectiveness, including customer experience metrics such as service level, waiting time metrics (e.g. number of calls in the queue), shrinkage by type (e.g. sickness, lateness) and agent schedule adherence
4. Employee satisfaction with WFM, typically part of an employee survey

Reporting and analysis are typically performed at the end of each planning cycle. The key steps are:

1. Report on how performance compared to target over the entire period.

- Identify root causes where performance goals are not met. For example, if the number of calls significantly exceeded forecast on a given day, find why that happened. Did the marketing department run a campaign but omit to tell the planning team so that business intelligence could be included in the forecast?
- Propose changes that eliminate the causes of failure next time around. Continuing the marketing example, the planner might propose a regular meeting with marketing to ensure shared visibility of upcoming campaigns. If the problem is insufficient staffing, there may be a case for hiring. In each case, the justification for the change should be clearly demonstrated by the analysis.



Reporting & analysis tips

- When calculating performance over a period of weeks, it is important to use proper calculations. For example, avoid taking ‘averages of averages’ and use weighted averages instead.
- A picture is worth a thousand words’ and charts have an important role to play in reporting. Be mindful of the impact of data visualization and learn how to tell a convincing story with your data.

What impact does reporting & analysis have?

By analyzing performance, doing root cause analysis, and learning lessons from each iteration, planning performance steadily improves over time. The forecast becomes more accurate, the staffing requirement always includes the right shrinkage, the schedule efficiency is higher, the agent schedule adherence is better, and so on. And sound analysis means that any changes to the contact center can be made on a data-driven basis, not based on hunches.

The value of reporting and analysis can be summed up with the axiom –‘if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it’. This principle has been attributed both to Peter F Drucker (the well-respected management thinker) and W Edwards Deming (the father of total quality management). Contact center planners are in the fortunate position of having ready access to data that is both available and useful.



Review of Competency Final Checklist

For the performance criteria of the module **Operate Contact Center Processes** is given below:

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 3.1

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
3.1.1	Steps for outstanding customer service are interpreted.		
3.1.2	Essential management routine is applied.		
3.1.3	Obstacles against outstanding service delivery are explored and identified.		
3.1.4	Service delivery channel is optimized for faster and better service.		
3.1.5	Cost-of-service failures are calculated.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 3.2

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
3.2.1	Customer interactions are analyzed.		
3.2.2	Approaches to elevate service quality are identified.		
3.2.3	Techniques to build a culture of continuous improvement are applied.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 3.3

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
3.3.1	Ways to handle call escalations are demonstrated.		
3.3.2	Customer requirements are identified.		
3.3.3	Methods to improve complaints handling in Contact Center are described.		
3.3.4	De-escalation Techniques are applied to handle an Angry Caller.		
3.3.5	Skills and diplomacy are applied to ensure customer satisfaction.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 3.4

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
3.4.1	Segmented data from relevant sources is collected.		
3.4.2	Collected data is analyzed using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software.		
3.4.3	Report is prepared as per requirement.		
3.4.4	Report is shared with authority.		

Now, I feel ready to undertake my formal competency assessment.

Signed:

Date:

Module 4: Manage & Track the Team Performance



Module 4: Manage & Track the Team Performance



Module Content

Module Descriptor: This unit covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to manage and track team performance. It specifically includes interpreting performance management strategies, applying leadership matrix, creating a contact center quality scorecard, monitoring performance according to KPIs, and conducting performance appraisal.

Nominal Duration: 60 hours



Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, trainee/student will be able to:

- 4.1 Interpret Performance Management Strategies
- 4.2 Apply Leadership Matrix
- 4.3 Create a Contact Center Quality Scorecard
- 4.4 Monitor performance according to KPIs
- 4.5 Conduct performance appraisal



PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1. Performance management strategies are explained.
2. Expectations in performance management are identified.
3. Steps of performance reviews are explained.
4. Performance management tools for contact center are described.

5. Four ways to assess a team member's results are described.
6. Quadrants of Leadership matrix are interpreted.
7. Performance improvement techniques for different performance patterns are selected.
8. Performance patterns are placed into the four quadrants of the leadership matrix.
9. Different ways to lead and motivate are described.

10. Key areas of Quality Assurance is described for contact center service.
11. Scores are collected from Quality Assurance Team.
12. Scores are measured and inserted in the Quality Monitoring Scorecard.
13. Meetings are arranged to remove subjectivity by calibrating quality scores.
14. Balanced scorecard is aligned with organization's four "perspectives" strategy.

15. Factors for choosing necessary KPIs are described.
16. Matrix or KPIs for the Balanced Scorecard is selected.
17. First Contact Resolution (FCR) is calculated.
18. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated.
19. Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) is calculated.
20. Customers' feedback is reviewed.
21. Technologies for best Return on Investment (ROI) are applied.

22. Individual performance of team members is evaluated using KPIs.
23. 360-degree feedback is provided to team members.
24. Areas of improvement are identified and communicated to the team members.
25. Performance appraisal is communicated to HR department.



Learning Outcome 4.1 - Interpret Performance Management Strategies



CONTENTS:

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: Definition, Strategy and Best Practice

BUILD A HIGH-PERFORMANCE CONTACT CENTER: Level up customer support strategy

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS: How to conduct

CONTACT CENTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: Key Tools and Software



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Performance management strategies are explained.
2. Expectations in performance management are identified.
3. Steps of performance reviews are explained.
4. Performance management tools for contact center are described.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ingredients and relevant materials
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities
- Paper and Pen



Learning Activities – 4.1

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
4.1 - Interpret Performance Management Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 ▪ Answer Key: 4.1.1 to 4.1.3



Information Sheet – 4.1.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Identify the concept of strategic performance management and how to create a strategy around quality that will strengthen contact center performance.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: Definition, Strategy and Best Practice

Content Summary:

What is performance management?

What is strategic performance management (SPM)?

Seven (7) Importance of strategic performance management

What Does a Great Performance Strategy Look Like?

1. Align objectives with organizational strategy
2. Set standards, criteria, and indicators
3. Choose organizational performance management methods
 - 3.1 *The Balanced Scorecard*
 - 3.2 *Management by Objectives*
 - 3.3 *Budget-driven Business Plans*
4. Build performance management into the business planning cycle
5. Ensure clear communication
6. Monitor and review

The Three-Step Strategic Performance Management Process

- Step 1- Setting and defining your goals.
- Step 2- Aligning your measures across your organization.
- Step 3- Organizing your performance management data.

Why Is a High-Performing Contact Center Important?

4 Steps to Optimize Contact Center Performance

Step-1. Use the Right Contact Center Metrics to Gauge Performance

- Establish key performance indicators.
- Analyze the Right Combination of Metrics

Step-2. Set Achievable Goals

- Set Clear Objectives
- Set Clear Expectations

Step-3. Manage Contact Center Staff Levels

- Empower Frontline Agents
- Provide Feedback and Coaching

Step-4. Provide Enterprise-Wide Visibility

- Aggregate Data in Easy-to-Use Dashboards
- Create a Complete View of Performance

How to continuously improve contact center performance?

Introduction

A couple of different things may come to mind when you hear the term “performance management.” In this Information Sheet, we’ll primarily be referring to contact center performance management (also called enterprise performance management)—but that has a separate definition from project performance management and employee (personnel) performance management. Look below to better understand how these terms relate, and how they are different from one another.

Enterprise Performance Management:

Enterprise performance management is the art of defining, measuring, and ultimately achieving organizational strategy. This entails thinking about the performance of entire organization as a whole, and considering how to link together employee goals at the enterprise, division, and department levels. When done correctly, enterprise performance management should examine the way in which your entire organization is performing—not just a slice of it.

Project Performance Management

Project performance management allows you to track how you're performing on particular projects that are helping to support or drive performance in part of your organization. While enterprise performance management deals with all aspects of an organization, **project performance management is more about the complex art of managing resources, people, schedules, budgets, and other interactions related to a single project.** Therefore, project performance management should not be considered identical to enterprise performance management, as they have slightly different goals.

Personnel Performance Management

Personnel performance management—which could also be called human resource (HR) performance management—entails looking at the performance of all employees, and how those individual performance levels are linked and aligned to the strategy of organization's teams, departments, and enterprise as a whole. Personnel performance management not only includes regular reviews of staff performance, but also encompasses employee competency evaluations, employee goal setting, salary reviews, culture reviews, managerial reviews, and employee feedback cycles.

What is performance management?

When properly designed and implemented, performance management techniques and processes enable an organization to monitor, manage and improve strategy execution and the delivery of results. Performance management is therefore one of the most critical factors in an organization's success, and the ability to successfully manage performance is the single most important skill for leaders and managers. But what exactly do we mean by "performance management" and how does it work?

Performance management involves measuring, reporting, and managing progress – from the individuals who work for a company, right up to the organization as a whole – with the aim of improving performance.

Armstrong and Baron define performance management as **“a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organizational performance. As such, it establishes a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved.”** They stress that it is **“a strategy which relates to every activity of the organization set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style, and communications systems.”** Examples of performance management processes or tools include **performance appraisals, key performance indicators (KPIs) and management dashboards.** Essentially, performance management is what organizations do to become more successful and stay ahead of their competitors.

What is strategic performance management (SPM)?

Also known as enterprise performance management (EPM) or corporate performance management (CPM), SPM focuses on the performance of the entire organization. It can be defined as a set of management processes that help the organization define and execute its strategy, and to measure and monitor performance in order to inform strategic decision making and learning.

“How do we manage our employee's performance as it relates to our organization as a whole?”

This is an important question. In below, we will get answer of above question through a thorough strategic performance management definition, the importance of strategic performance management, each step of the strategic performance management process, and a great deal more. We hope this information sheet will help give your organization a strong approach to strategic planning and execution.

Strategic performance management is about creating an environment in which organizational performance becomes everyone's everyday job. This involves a clear understanding of the strategic direction and competitive advantage by everyone in the organization as well as their accepted responsibility to continuous refinement of this strategic direction. In such an environment employees use performance indicators to test and challenge the strategic assumptions that underlie performance. Relevant performance indicators are collected to inform strategic decision making at all organizational levels, and not merely to put them into reports that no-one really cares about.

Definition of Strategic Performance Management

According to **Bernard Mar** (World-renowned futurist, influencer and thought leader in the fields of business and technology) Strategic Performance Management (SPM) is therefore defined as the organizational approach to define, assess, implement, and continuously refine organizational strategy. It encompasses methodologies, frameworks, and indicators that help organizations in the formulation of their strategy and enable employees to gain strategic insights which allow them to challenge strategic assumptions, refine strategic thinking, and inform strategic decision making and learning.

Armstrong and Baron (Author of Book 'Performance Management in Action') define performance management as –a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organizational performance. As such, it establishes a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved.” They stress that it is –a strategy which relates to every activity of the organization set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style, and communications systems.”

–Strategic performance management is defined as performance measurement, monitoring, and improvement methodology that help achieve overall organizational objectives.”

The link between employee goals and organizational goals is important for two reasons:

- **It establishes accountability.** It's imperative to set expectations for tasks and assign responsibility to a person or group of people for completing them. *Not* doing so (or failing to communicate those expectations to employees) creates confusion around roles and responsibilities. It's very likely that crucial tasks will be overlooked as a result, reducing the probability of achieving your overall goals.
- **It boosts employee engagement.** Employees are more motivated to contribute and make thoughtful decisions when they understand how their individual responsibilities impact organizational objectives. When the entire group sees the bigger picture—and how their efforts link together—it encourages everyone to perform at their best.

The focus of SPM is on strategic performance improvement and, as such, SPM encompasses all sorts of processes for defining strategic objectives, measuring performance, analyzing performance, reporting and reviewing performance, and aligning the organization's people and its culture.

SPM tools and techniques include management dashboards, Balanced Scorecards, KPIs, analytics, strategic planning, budgeting and forecasting, benchmarking, business excellence models, Six Sigma, enterprise risk management, project or program management, and performance reporting.

Importance of strategic performance management

“Why should I care about strategic performance management in the first place?”

Strategic performance management helps:

1-Set defined goals and realistic expectations.

When employees are involved in a performance management process, they are much more likely to be informed about the goals and expectations they are expected to meet and how their job plays into company objectives. Managers/Team leaders are also more likely to receive feedback about what type of support their team members need to be successful. When employees know what is expected of them and managers/Team leaders know how to support their team, the company wins with higher productivity and morale.

As example: Your management want to grow their business—but doubling profits in five years and growing by 2% annually are two very different types and levels of growth. Strategic performance management helps you set parameters for how to achieve the growth you are aiming for instead of falling back on the useless proverb, ***“Let’s work harder and smarter, and we’ll see results!”***

2-Drive the right behavior.

People in management roles across all levels of your organization have to make decisions that will, in some way or another, affect the entire organization. All of these decisions—whether they’re from marketing or operations or HR—eventually contribute to stronger performance if all those decisions work together. SPM helps ensure that all divisions, departments, and groups in the company make choices that keep the organization—and other departments—in mind. In fact, you may see a certain department willing to compromise on a decision or the direction of a project because they recognize that resources could be better allocated in a different area. Giving departments the ability to partner up will help ensure company-wide success.

3-Get your team on the same page.

If each department head has the same understanding of where the company is headed, department-specific decisions will more than likely send the organization in the right direction. But if department heads aren’t aware, their choices could become problematic. For example, let’s say the leaders of your organization want broader job descriptions to attract individuals who could work in multiple roles, but HR continues tightly-defining newly posted jobs. This small decision could potentially prevent the organization from growing in the right direction.

4-Makes it easier to identify training needs

When employee skills and productivity are monitored in relation to company goals on a regular or ongoing basis, it is much easier to identify training needs. Once training opportunities are identified by comparing current skills with company needs, training can be provided to help bridge the gap.

5-Helps employees define career paths

Many employees will only stay with a company if they see opportunities for growth and career advancement. Using a performance management strategy is the best way to help employees define a career path that maximizes their skills and to identify employees who are suited to a promotion or department transfer within your organization. And because all employees are part of the process, managers are much more likely to provide equal opportunities to all workers.

6-Increased employee morale and employee retention

Performance management is an ongoing, constructive, and collaborative process. So, consistent employee feedback sessions can improve the quality of communication between team leaders and their team and generally boost morale when positive feedback is provided. By contrast, employees are twice as likely to be disengaged with their jobs if they are ignored by their manager – leading to dissatisfaction, lower productivity, and higher turnover.

7- Increases self-motivation and reduces micro-management

There is probably nothing that employees hate more than being micromanaged. When employees are aware of how their performance and productivity fits into the organization’s short and long-term goals and receive positive feedback for their work, they are more likely to be self-motivated. In turn, this should reduce the impulse to micromanage employees.

What Does a Great Performance Strategy Look Like?

The ideal performance management strategy is likely to have the following elements within it:

1. Align objectives with organizational strategy
2. Set standards, criteria, and indicators
3. Choose evaluation methods
4. Build performance management into the business planning cycle
5. Ensure clear communication
6. Monitor and review

the next step is outlining a concrete strategy on how to utilize performance management to actualize employee potential and promote organizational success.

1. Align objectives with organizational strategy

The purpose, values, and goals of each unit or department of the organization should support or relate to the purpose, values, and goals of the organization. This will create a situation where each time that a departmental goal is achieved, the organization moves forward.

Setting clear expectations in the periodic departmental strategy meetings will foster alignment by giving managers, department heads, and other stakeholders the opportunity to sync up and evaluate progress. Managers can communicate any insights or changes to their teams, ensuring that every member of an organization is acting in tandem.

2. Set standards, criteria, and indicators

Transparent management is vital to the credibility of the performance management process. Setting clear standards and indicators enables every individual to understand their role in the organization. Individual deliverables should be designed according to the SMART acronym: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

3. Choose organizational performance management methods

Organizational performance management (sometimes called corporate performance management) is a term used to describe the methodologies and processes that help you define, measure, and ultimately achieve your strategy.

Three commonly used forms of organizational performance management systems are:

3.1 The Balanced Scorecard

In our humble opinion, the **Balanced Scorecard** (BSC) is one of the best types of performance management systems available, and for good reason: **88%** of BSC users say the framework is extremely or very useful in helping them achieve their goals.

What makes the BSC unique is that it combines four different business perspectives—**financial, customer, internal processes, and people**—to help companies understand and achieve their organizational objectives. Some key points about the BSC are:

- Its main components:
 - **Objectives** — high-level organizational goals that state what your organization is trying to accomplish strategically, broken down according to the four perspectives
 - **Measures** — key performance indicators (KPIs) that help you understand if you're accomplishing your objectives strategically.
 - **Initiatives** — key action programs developed to achieve your objectives, sometimes referred to as projects.
- It facilitates alignment across divisions and departments because you can link departmental objectives to the overall organizational objectives. You can also see how measures and projects are connected to organization-level measures.
- It requires a structured reporting process. Creating a BSC is predicated on reviewing your strategy on a regular basis—and you can only do this if your strategy is organized.

[The details about the BSC are described in the **information sheet 4.3.4** Balanced scorecard is aligned with organization's four "perspectives" strategy.]

3.2 Management by Objectives

Created by influential management consultant Peter Drucker, Management by Objectives (MBO) has many variations. Essentially, it centers on creating a set (anywhere from two or six) of organizational objectives, which are then used as guideposts for creating individual employee objectives.

Some of its key characteristics are:

- Objectives are not necessarily linked to one another. (This is different from the BSC approach, where objectives are aligned within an overall strategy.)
- Objectives may be defined as part of a collaborative effort between leaders and employees. The idea is that employee participation creates buy-in, and helps clarify the path to obtaining the objectives.
- Objectives are the main focus of MBO; less emphasis is placed on how those objectives will be achieved. Organizations tend to rely on either measures or projects (but rarely both). The key to making MBO work is to create a structure that clearly differentiates between projects and measures.

They don't work the same way, so trying to lump them together will inevitably cause confusion.

The term *Management by Objectives* has been around a while, but you don't always see it in strategy documents. One way to recognize this approach is by looking at the strategic plan, which might have a set of goals and then objectives. You will also then see a list of activities or actions that the organization is grouping together to try to improve those goals and objectives.

3.3 Budget-driven Business Plans

Sometimes, the budget leads the performance management process rather than strategy. In this case, "work plans" are linked to the overall budget of the organization, and spending goes to the projects and programs that deliver results. It is a less commonly used performance management system, but it works for some organizations. Some of its key characteristics are:

- Income sources and expenses (line items) may be grouped into categories so leaders can easily identify areas that need downsizing or potential opportunities for investing.
- It may involve a combination of ongoing and new projects.
- It is driven by finance, which is different from the other approaches that are organized by a strategy department.
- The development process usually starts with the finance team providing last year's spending to a department, and asking the department to list the activities they hope to accomplish within the coming year without changing the budget.

4. Build performance management into the business planning cycle

As performance management deals with personal objectives that in turn feed into the organization's strategy for achieving its corporate objectives, performance management should be an integral part of the business planning cycle. Regular and meaningful assessment of performance takes place for the organization, teams, and individuals. So, make room for employee development, manager training, periodic reviews, and other performance management activities. Real-time coaching is factored in to uplift performance and maintain quality standards.

5. Ensure clear communication

Successful performance management depends on the engagement and involvement of all employees. Be clear about what your performance management process is seeking to achieve, how it will operate, how objectives will be set, what criteria will be used for evaluating performance, and whether compensation is involved. A culture of open communication will enable management to stay agile and productive. Regular briefing sessions and procedures enable managers and staff to keep up to date and respond to changes.

6. Monitor and review

Unless you keep track of what your performance management strategy is achieving, it won't be effective. Using an online performance management platform will give you control over performance data, metrics, and employee feedback. Review this information and share insights across your organization to celebrate achievements—or leverage this knowledge to swiftly implement any necessary changes so that your organization can keep operations on track.

The Three-Step Strategic Performance Management Process

Corporate performance management should be the guiding structure and process for executing strategy. It can be boiled down into three specific steps:

Step 1- Setting and defining your goals.

Step 2- Aligning your measures across your organization.

Step 3- Organizing your performance management data.

Below are the details of what you need to do from start to finish in order to move through the performance management process:

Step 1: Set and define your goals.

1.1 Decide on goals.

As simple as this sounds, it's quite critical. If a restaurant decides to hire more staff, expand the restaurant, and eventually open another location, you may be quick to say these are all positive steps. But without setting performance goals, these may not be the *right* steps. For example, if the restaurant is losing money at a rapid rate, does the data support these steps? Or would it be better for the restaurant to open five new locations immediately, all at once? At any rate, you cannot say whether or not you are making strategic progress without set goals. For an in-depth guide into selecting the right strategic goals for your organization, take a look at this article.

1.2 Understand your organization's capabilities, and how far you want to expand

If you manufacture plastic products for the healthcare industry, setting a goal to expand into manufacturing food products might be too much of a stretch. To set achievable goals, you need to consider your competitive advantage (what sets your organization apart) and your scope (what is realistic for your organization based on where you're at in your current strategic journey). Defining your OAS statement will help you set goals that will guide your organization to success.

1.3 Link your performance goals together.

Your goals should all link together to tell a bigger-picture story of your organization's strategy. We recommend dividing them into four perspectives—financial goals, customer goals, process goals, and people goals—and linking your performance goals in those four perspectives together. This helps communicate what is important to your organization, and how those goals relate to one another.

Step 2: Align Your Measures Across Your Organization

All organizations measure "things"—their financials, receivables, customer satisfaction, the number of widgets they make, waste, employee turnover, and so much more. But to ensure your organization is on track with your goals, you need to set measures that actually reflect your strategy—not just those that are simple or expedient to track. As you move through this process, keep the following in mind:

1.1 Data for your measures will come from all over your organization and should be stored in a central location. You'll have measures from finance, operations, sales, marketing, customer management, and more. The data associated with these measures will likely be tracked in a variety of ways—from Excel to departmental software solutions to emails to pen and paper. It's far too difficult to manage your performance, though, if this measure data is floating around in disparate systems across the organization, so it's important to get it all into the same system. (We'll discuss that further in the next step.)

1.2 Your measures must link directly to your goals. For example, if you intend to drive growth through new products, one of your measures should consider what percentage of your revenue is derived from those products (as opposed to just a measure of your overall revenue growth).

1.3 Every goal should be matched with a target. In order for your measures to be meaningful, you'll need to set targets for each of your goals. For example, if you want to see an increase in revenue, you won't know whether you're on track to meet that goal if you haven't set a specific target.

Step 3: Organize Your Performance Management Data

In the past, the organization of performance data was handled in one of two ways: Through Excel or PowerPoint, or through comprehensive ERP software. **Excel and PowerPoint** are still the most used

tools for performance management data. Data owners send their data to a central office (or single individual) on a regular basis, and that office or individual is tasked with consolidating this data and creating management reports that are distributed monthly or quarterly.

There are many challenges with this approach, however. Namely, it takes a *great* deal of manual effort to compile the data, there's a constant risk of human error, and the lack of version control can cause major data issues. And those problems are just the tip of the iceberg!

Some organizations use **ERP software systems**—like those provided by SAP, Oracle, IBM, Siemens, etc.—to organize their performance management data. However, there are areas of concern with these systems as well:

- **Cost:** Many large organizations utilize ERP software, but these implementations tend to run upwards of tens of millions of dollars. And while they're good for tracking transactional data (like how many widgets you've produced), setting up the system to track performance data (like the number of customers served) can be a real challenge. It can take weeks to months to configure your ERP to handle your performance management data, and could cost an additional ten of thousands of dollars to do so.
- **Complexity:** The challenge with corporate performance management is that it is a *nimble* process. You'll be continuously modifying your measures as your strategy changes over time; continuously modifying an ERP system will be complex and time consuming. In fact, each modification could take days and thousands of dollars, as ERP systems are not nimble enough to keep up with your strategy changes.

Build high-performing contact center: level up your customer support strategy

One of the most effective ways to increase customer loyalty and boost sales is to level up your customer support strategy. You want your customers to feel valued and to get value from every interaction they have with your organization.

The key to making this happen is to build a high-performance contact center. The contact center is the hub of your customer support efforts, so, as a contact center manager, you want to make sure everything, from your processes to your reporting, is working toward the goal of exceptional customer experience.

What is Contact Center Performance Management?

Contact center performance management refers to the tracking, analyzing, calculating, and improving of agent and employee performance. Whether you run a virtual, remote, or on-premise contact center, conducting performance management and reviews is important to determine how your agents are performing and how satisfied your customers are.

Contact center performance management is a continuous process of communication between a team leader and agents to accomplish the organization's goals. From hiring suitable agents to setting the right goals, contact center performance management involves a lot of tasks and processes and while life as a contact center manager/Team Leader can be hectic, you can ease the workload with the right techniques and tools. However, multiple elements influence this process of continuous performance management:

Managing contact center performance revolves around two things: **information and communication**.

- **Contact center manager/Team Leader need the right performance metrics. Then, they need to take that data and develop strategies to enhance the contact center.**
- **Manager/Team Leader also need to communicate those strategies, as well as performance feedback, to empower the agents to continually improve in their role**

Why Is a High-Performing Contact Center Important?

When you make resolving issues feel effortless for your customers and help them derive value from your product or service, you're leveraging your customer support strategy to offer what Gartner calls **–value enhancement.**"

Doing this can lead to economic benefits for your organization. For example, Gartner has found that the probability that customers will stay with a company is [82 percent](#) when customer support reaches the value-enhancement level, compared to 61 percent for a low-effort resolution and 37 percent for a high-effort resolution.

Contact center performance management is the process of calculating, tracking, and improving the performance of your contact center teams.

This process is crucial because the performance of your contact center agents determines efficiency, productivity, and conversion rates. It also has a direct impact on customer service and thus the customer experience. Providing positive experiences is essential for retaining customers.

Your contact center is the heart of your customer service efforts. It's what you use to interact with customers, solve their problems, and ensure they feel supported. So, you want performance to be as high as possible so your company can reap the rewards of high customer loyalty.

Challenges of Contact Center Performance Management

When it comes to contact center performance management, it's crucial that you know your metrics. By tracking the right metrics and key performance indicators (KPI's), you can ascertain how your contact center is performing overall. You will also be able to identify the areas in which you excel and those that require improvement. As there are a multitude of possible metrics, it can be difficult to know which ones to focus on

Traditionally, contact center managers have used a combination of quality monitoring, team trainings, and one-on-one coaching to address employee engagement and improve agent performance. However, gathering enough data to decide where to direct resources to improve performance requires a huge amount of time and managerial energy. What's more, scaling up your team requires more workforce management resources directed toward even more performance and quality management personnel.

Contact center agents may also take issue with the performance metrics being used to assess them. Quality assurance reviewers may give feedback based on only one or two recorded calls, which the agent may not see as representative of their overall performance. Inherent bias can become an issue, as one call may be seen in different ways by different reviewers.

Knowing where to direct performance management resources is one of the biggest challenges for the modern contact center . Agent performance must be assessed between objective measurements like call handling time and more subjective ones such as the quality of customer interactions and customer satisfaction with the results of their call. Contact center management must rely on a more holistic assessment for shaping their performance management solutions beyond just numerical KPIs, CSAT and NPS scores.

When you have the contact center analytics and reporting you need to track performance, set goals, and ensure you have the right number of agents on each day, you can operate a high-performing contact center. In that case you need to **optimize your contact center** and deliver a superior experience with every interaction.

4 Steps to Optimize Contact Center Performance

To increase performance and empower your agents, contact center managers/Team leaders can follow **these 4 steps**, which can help shape your performance management and workforce optimization solutions.

Step-1. Use the Right Contact Center Metrics to Gauge Performance

- 1.1 Establish key performance indicators.
- 1.2 Analyze the Right Combination of Metrics

Step-2. Set Achievable Goals

- 2.1 Set Clear Objectives
- 2.2 Set Clear Expectations

Step-3. Manage Contact Center Staff Levels

- 3.1 Empower Frontline Agents
- 3.2 Provide Feedback and Coaching

Step-4. Provide Enterprise-Wide Visibility

- 4.1 Aggregate Data in Easy-to-Use Dashboards
- 4.2 Create a Complete View of Performance

Now, we focus on the next level of details of each step:

Step-1. Use the Right Contact Center Metrics to Gauge Performance

1.1 Establish key performance indicators.

When it comes to contact center performance management, it's crucial that you know your metrics. By tracking the right metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), you can ascertain how your contact center is performing overall. As there are a multitude of possible metrics, it can be difficult to know which ones to focus on. Tracking them all is an impractical and impossible task -so you need to be strategic and choose your metrics wisely. Fortunately, we've compiled a list of most important performance the metrics for contact centers to help you get started. By tracking the 12 right metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), you can ascertain how your contact center is performing overall.

Performance Tracking Metrics			
1	First Contact Resolution (FCR)	7	Peak Hour Traffic
2	First Response Time (FRT)	8	Call Arrival Rate
3	Average After-Call Work Time (ACWT)	9	Cost Per Call (CPC)
4	Average Handling Time (AHT)	10	Average call transfer rate
5	Abandonment Rate	11	Forecast accuracy
6	Service Level	12	Quality Score

1.2 Analyze the Right Combination of Metrics

According to a research report by Metrigy, The Metrics Gap, CX leaders have traditionally focused on Call Handle Time (CHT) and First Contact Resolution (FCR) in order to reduce costs and increase agent efficiency. However, these metrics do not represent whether agents are increasing customer satisfaction scores. It is okay to let agents spend more time with customers to address their issues – even if it increases costs.

According to the Five9 2021 Customer Service Index Report, consumers are willing to have a longer interaction time if it results in getting the right answer or information. Other top agent performance analytics include first interaction resolution, Sales vs. Sales quotas, self-service completion rate and more.

Step-2. Set Achievable Goals

Once you know what metrics you're looking at, you can establish your baseline numbers. Then it's time to start goal-setting and strategizing.

1.1 Set Clear Objectives

Setting clear objectives is crucial in helping individuals manage their own performance and for line managers to have regular, open conversations about how things are going. It's key to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the objectives, the key results that the individuals are being measured against, and the key initiatives or projects that they'll be involved in to help them reach their goals. To create and maintain a high-performing team, the start is about building a culture of listening, trust and encouraging two-way feedback.

2.2 Set Clear Expectations

Agents often struggle to perform to the required standard when unsure of what is expected of them by management. Yet many contact centers assume that agents understand this without reaffirming expectations during coaching.

Creating a clear quality scorecard framework is essential to set these expectations in stone. Filling this in and passing it on to the agent – with the relevant call/screen recording – allows people to see where they performed above and below expectation.

Calibration sessions also facilitate understanding. Through a performance coaching system, agents can request these sessions when they disagree with a quality score. The coach then scores the contact with them, discussing disparities and developing a shared view of what "good" looks like.

Asking agents how they would adapt the scorecard and considering their ideas is an excellent way to increase agent engagement. It also demonstrates a willingness to change and shows respect for their opinions.

Step-3. Manage Contact Center Staff Levels

As you look at your reporting data, you might find that your contact center is over or understaffed. If it's overstaffed, not only are you losing money, but your agents might feel disengaged at work. Even more problematic, if it's understaffed, your customers could be waiting too long and your agents are likely stressed.

Look at metrics like average handle time, average wait time, and the number of calls in each time interval to understand how well your agents are handling current call volumes. If there's a problem that can't be fixed with a reasonable increase in productivity, consider hiring more agents so you're [properly staffed](#).

3.1 Empower Frontline Agents

A vital driver behind enhancing customer experience and staff performance is retention and development of empowered employees. Giving your frontline agents more control over processes, action and performance can do just that.

Empowerment could be anything from offering team members opportunities to learn new skills within communication, decision-making and self-awareness through continuous training to using enhancements to technology or processes that improve agents' decision-making and confidence.

There are a variety of quality assurance metrics that could be tracked and fed back to the agents to inspire informed actions that improve customer experience. Consider first call resolutions, CSAT score and NPS scores as some examples.

There are many CRM technologies available that offer performance and predictive analytics too, which could help empower agents to decide how long to stay on a call, when to call a customer back or to know when time should be spent calling vs. updating support content.

3.2 Provide Feedback and Coaching

Performance management strategy should provide clear expectations, daily feedback, and encourage employees for adequate or excellent performance.

Your performance management tools should be able to create and execute targeted development plans, measure and deliver incentives and performance-related pay, while adhering to sustained strategic performance plans and providing multiple improvement opportunities, thereby aligning the individual and the organization.

Step-4. Provide Enterprise-Wide Visibility

Having an enterprise-wide single source of truth provides executives with a quick view access of the contact center.

This is like giving a crystal ball to see into the future. If they see stats that look off balance, they can dive in to uncover opportunities to make improvements – maybe it impacts operations, fulfillment or billing. Resolving those issues will remove friction and improve customer experience (CX).

Employees will also recognize actions taken, improving voice of the employee (VOE). Supervisors also will have the proper view of their agents' stats, having actionable data to help those who truly need it when they need it.

1.1 Aggregate Data in Easy-to-Use Dashboards

One of the largest problems we see is that agents and supervisors don't have proper data. Whether it be that metrics and scores aren't generated automatically, or it takes a professional to decipher reports, if a contact center doesn't have easily accessible and accurate data at their fingertips for their staff, it can create a cycle of discouragement.

Agents who have easy-to-use dashboards can track their daily analytics in a flash and see what they can do to improve their current stats. Supervisors find it easier to have a pulse on agents because they can quickly see who needs additional training and who is knocking their performance out of the park.

4.2 Create a Complete View of Performance

Unify data from across the organization, to break down silos and supercharge a complete view of contact center performance. Such a view, enhanced through customizable dashboards, could include agent adherence rates, handling times and various customer experience metrics.

With an omnichannel solution, leaders can also connect data streams and extract insights into agent performance at a glance, thanks to rich data visualizations. Then, personalized training can be introduced to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. What's more, modern coaching solutions track metrics in real time, bolstering remote performance management. As opposed to accessing static insights that lag a day or so behind, contact center leaders can spot real-time trends and give agents on-the-spot recognition for excellent work.

Alternatively, if things are waning, a quick intervention can be triggered to support agents and team managers to raise their confidence and revive performance.

The takeaway:

Tracking and monitoring your metrics is the foundation of successful contact center management. By setting goals and monitoring your progress, you can optimize performance, improve efficiency, and boost productivity. You'll also enjoy a significant increase in customer satisfaction. But this won't happen overnight – it's an ongoing process that requires time and effort.

It also requires the right technology.

If your contact center software uses **artificial intelligence**, you can dig even deeper into customer experience.

Fortunately, contact center AI technologies such as real-time speech analytics are available for today's contact center. Along with personal observations by the agent, these tools make it far easier to collect data on subjective factors such as a caller's emotional state.

[AI interaction analysis](#) will evaluate every call transcription to track the sentiment of the conversations between customers and agents. When you can see which conversations are positive, negative, or neutral, you can identify which agents are delivering a good experience and which ones might need more training and guidance.

How to continuously improve contact center performance?

6 Key Steps to Deliver a Measurable Improvement in Contact Center Performance

This uses the levers of performance management, coaching and QA to help agents and team leaders to engage with KPI reports, QA checks and performance data whilst operating remotely.

we have broken these down into six key steps:

1. **KPI Measures** – looking at the requirement for a balanced set of KPI measures and how narrowing the spread of performance across agent quartiles delivers a performance benefit across the operation.
2. **The Impact of Coaching** – the role that team leaders play in delivering targeted coaching sessions, and recording the impact of these on agent performance.
3. **Using QA** – all regulatory industries use quality scoring of calls as a means of ensuring agent compliance, but those same QA processes can also be used to identify examples of the ideal call, positively influencing agent behavior.
4. **Choosing the Right Tools** – by providing better data, insight and support, all individuals can become self-propelled and teams become self-managed.
5. **Target Setting for Reward and Recognition** – using a peer group-based approach to identify, celebrate and learn from top performers, free from the bias of external factors.
6. **Making Performance Improvement Fun** – the role of gamification in engaging agents and team leaders to deliver their best.

Everyone can see what their colleagues are achieving – becoming more consciously aware – thereby creating healthy competition between staff and motivating agents to improve their individual performance.

These days, there are many more ways to apply the norms of social media to help reinforce positive behaviors. From getting a quick 'like' from your leader, to being the best improver in a team peer group, they all add up and help to reinforce an agent's achievements.

What gamification is producing is some peer group competition. Everyone can see what their colleagues are achieving – becoming more consciously aware – thereby creating healthy competition between staff and motivating agents to improve their individual performance.



Self-Check Quiz – 4.1.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What is strategic performance management?

Question 2: What are the 7 reasons strategic performance management is critical to achieving high levels of organizational performance?

Question 3: What is the Three-Step Strategic Performance Management Process?

Question 4: Which are 2 areas of concern with ERP systems that is challenge to organize their performance management data?

Question 5: What is Contact Center Performance Management?

Question 6: What is the 4 Steps method to Optimize Contact Center Performance?

Question 7: Which are the 12 most important performance the metrics for contact centers?

Question 8: How to continuously improve contact center performance?



Answer Key – 4.1.1

Answer 1:

Definition of Strategic Performance Management:

–Strategic performance management is defined as performance measurement, monitoring, and improvement methodology that help achieve overall organizational objectives.”

Answer 2: *There are the 7 reasons strategic performance management is critical to achieving high levels of organizational performance:*

- Set defined goals and realistic expectations.
- Drive the right behavior.
- Get your team on the same page.
- Makes it easier to identify training needs
- Helps employees define career paths
- Increased employee morale and employee retention
- Increases self-motivation and reduces micro-management

Answer 3: *The Three-Step Strategic Performance Management Process:*

Corporate performance management should be the guiding structure and process for executing strategy. It can be boiled down into three specific steps:

1. Setting and defining your goals.
2. Aligning your measures across your organization.
3. Organizing your performance management data.

Answer 4: there are 2 areas of concern with ERP systems that is challenge to organize their performance management data:

Cost: Many large organizations utilize ERP software, but It can take weeks to months to configure your ERP to handle your performance management data, and could cost an additional ten of thousands of dollars to do so.

Complexity: The challenge with corporate performance management is that it is a nimble process. You’ll be continuously modifying your measures as your strategy changes over time; continuously modifying an ERP system will be complex and time consuming. In fact, each modification could take days and thousands of dollars, as ERP systems are not nimble enough to keep up with your strategy changes.

Answer 5:

Contact center performance management refers to the tracking, analyzing, calculating, and improving of agent and employee performance. Whether you run a virtual, remote, or on-premise contact center, conducting performance management and reviews is important to determine how your agents are performing and how satisfied your customers are.

Answer 6:**Step-1. Use the Right Contact Center Metrics to Gauge Performance**

Establish key performance indicators.
Analyze the Right Combination of Metrics

Step-2. Set Achievable Goals

Set Clear Objectives
Set Clear Expectations

Step-3. Manage Contact Center Staff Levels

Empower Frontline Agents
Provide Feedback and Coaching

Step-4. Provide Enterprise-Wide Visibility

Aggregate Data in Easy-to-Use Dashboards
Create a Complete View of Performance

Answer 7: Following 12 most important performance the metrics for contact centers:

Performance Tracking Metrics			
1	First Contact Resolution (FCR)	7	Peak Hour Traffic
2	First Response Time (FRT)	8	Call Arrival Rate
3	Average After-Call Work Time (ACWT)	9	Cost Per Call (CPC)
4	Average Handling Time (AHT)	10	Average call transfer rate
5	Abandonment Rate	11	Forecast accuracy
6	Service Level	12	Quality Score

Answer 8: Six Key Steps to Deliver a Measurable Improvement in Contact Center Performance

- **KPI Measures** – looking at the requirement for a balanced set of KPI measures and how narrowing the spread of performance across agent quartiles delivers a performance benefit across the operation.
- **The Impact of Coaching** – the role that team leaders play in delivering targeted coaching sessions, and recording the impact of these on agent performance.
- **Using QA** – all regulatory industries use quality scoring of calls as a means of ensuring agent compliance, but those same QA processes can also be used to identify examples of the ideal call, positively influencing agent behavior.
- **Choosing the Right Tools** – by providing better data, insight and support, all individuals can become self-propelled and teams become self-managed.
- **Target Setting for Reward and Recognition** – using a peer group-based approach to identify, celebrate, and learn from top performers, free from the bias of external factors.
- **Making Performance Improvement Fun** – the role of gamification in engaging agents and team leaders to deliver their best.



Information Sheet – 4.1.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to conduct an effective customer service performance review.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS: How to conduct

Content Summary:

What is a customer service performance review?

Why is customer service performance review important?

- Boosts agent retention:
- Engaged agents make happy customers:
- Raises the game of your whole team:
- Helps maintain a consistent and superior CX:
- Map the right talent to the right support role:

The Five Keys elements of Effective Performance Review Process

Assessment:

Feedback:

Give positive reinforcement and constructive criticism:

Exchange of views:

Agreement:

Conduct an Effective Customer Service Performance Review

When many people think about traditional performance reviews they imagine the much-dreaded annual review, but limiting employee reviews to a big annual appraisal is falling out of favor. The traditional structure has been found to limit collaboration and innovation and doesn't foster employee engagement, growth, or learning. But this model is changing. A growing number of global companies are shifting to a performance management strategy that is continual and focuses on individual development and cross-organizational alignment instead of a zero-sum annual model.

In the contact center, the process of managing individuals is typically handled by HR or Team Leader, but it should be carried out with organizational objectives in mind. Ideally organization has a defined strategy and a plan to execute it; you also have a list of projects/processes that have been developed specifically to achieve your objectives. Your people work toward accomplishing those objectives daily, using their skills and time to carry out the necessary tasks that will advance your plan. Thus, every individual's goals should feed into the organization's overall goals.

Performance reviews are an integral aspect of your performance management strategy. They enable both parties to assess progress based on past performance, set targets and goals for the future. If they are conducted effectively the discussion will be a genuine opportunity for reflection on what's been done and how it's been done.

What is a customer service performance review?

A contact center performance review, also known as performance evaluation, is a structured employee feedback process to assess how a customer service agent has contributed to the business during a specific period, identifying their strengths and challenges for future opportunities and growth in their career.

A performance review is the perfect time to,

- Track progress on predetermined goals
- Acknowledge an agent's achievements
- Identify gaps and setbacks in employee performance
- Realign your team to changing business objectives
- Suggest training and development plans as needed

The evaluation process isn't necessarily only an annual event but can be done on a monthly or quarterly basis to have more impactful discussions and course-correct along the way. As an efficient customer service manager, having regular check-ins and reviews with your team of support agents is an absolute win-win for both your team and your organization. Read on to know why.

Why is customer service performance review important?

Though assessing and scheduling review discussions regularly with your agents would take a big chunk of your time, the rewards of the process are manifold.

– **Boosts agent retention:** When you give your team opportunities for growth, you support them in their career path, and when you have regular customer support performance reviews, you get to keep them on your support team longer. Expressing interest to know your agents' day-to-day challenges, opportunities to improve, and suggesting training as needed, indicate that you care for your team. When you talk regularly about performance and coach your employees, they see that there is a real-time investment in support, and it makes them encouraged for their own career to be moving forward, rather than constantly looking for ways to jump ship.

– **Engaged agents make happy customers:** A [HBR survey](#) reveals that 54% of respondents point to better employee engagement for happier customers. Employees who get regular feedback from their managers are three times more likely to be engaged in their work than those who have only annual reviews. Agents who have these ongoing conversations about their performance are more aligned to the company goals and know exactly what they need to work on for achieving greater customer satisfaction.

– **Raises the game of your whole team:** According to HBR, everyone plays a –functional role, based on their formal position and technical skill, and a psychological role, based on the kind of person they are.” By managing the customer support agents on your team, you can help move forward both in their functional roles *and* their psychological ones, subsequently leveling up your team in two different ways. Keeping a balance between the two will give you the most highly functioning team possible.

– **Helps maintain a consistent and superior CX:** Going through the process of customer support performance review, you can ensure consistency and quality across your support responses and documentation, which in turn improves the overall customer experience you deliver. In your conversations with direct reports, ensure that you talk about their ticket history and what they would potentially do to improve internal processes, leading to good customer service.

– **Map the right talent to the right support role:** As you go through customer service employee evaluation more regularly and talk with more of your employees, you will begin to get a sense of who *is* performing above par and who could perform better. That means that, ideally, the more frequently and regularly you conduct these customer support career development conversations, the more often the right person would be matched with the right job.

The Five Keys elements of Effective Performance Review Process

You have got performance metrics to pay attention to, career growth, and paths of interest for your customer service representatives (Agents). You've also got to check how your agents influence individual customer relationships. That is why you need periodic performance reviews that fairly evaluate a customer service agent's contribution to the team and help them stay engaged at their jobs.

In this section, we have covered the **five essential steps** to conduct an effective customer service performance evaluation, what you can write in a performance review for your agents, and helpful review phrases that you can use in an evaluation comment.

Accepting differences in style, discussions are likely to include the following key elements:

1. **Assessment:** Measure the results and progress against the agreed targets, standards and development plans.
2. **Feedback:** Invite the individual to share how they feel they are progressing and provide them with additional factual information on how they have been doing from a management perspective.

3. **Give positive reinforcement and constructive criticism:** Point out what's been done well so it can be maintained or improved upon; highlight areas for improvement.
4. **Exchange of views:** A good performance review involves a full and frank exchange on what's been achieved, the challenges involved, what needs to be done to achieve more, how individuals think and feel about their work, the way they are managed and their future.
5. **Agreement:** A joint understanding is required about what must be done by manager and staff to improve performance, develop knowledge, skills and capabilities. Work problems that are raised need to be addressed.

Conducting an impactful customer service performance review sets the stage not just for the evaluation and growth of your team members but can also identify larger trends within your support strategy.

How To Conduct An Effective Customer Service Performance Review

Now that you know *why* you should perform customer service reviews, let's talk about what performance management actually looks like for a customer service team. Here are five steps to help you in the evaluation process of a customer service rep.

1-Preparing for the performance review

When both the manager and employee prepare for the performance review, it can lead to an effective and meaningful review process. Begin the process by:

- Reviewing documents and conversations
 - Last year's performance review
 - Mid-year check-ins
 - Job description
 - Employee Self-Assessment
 - Notes accumulated during the year
- Identifying the following:
 - Accomplishments
 - Progress on goals
 - Areas of exceptional performance
 - Areas of growth
 - Additional responsibilities taken on
 - Contributions to special projects
 - Challenges encountered
 - Areas where development is needed or desired

2-Writing the performance review

- Use clear, concise language to describe:
 - Performance compared to agreed-upon expectations
 - Key accomplishments and contributions
 - Examples of strengths and development opportunities
 - Key expectations for the coming year
- Focus on observable and measurable performance
- Cite specific examples
- Provide actionable feedback
- Avoid vague statements and exaggerations
- Celebrate successes and position shortfalls as an opportunity for learning and adjustment
- Use bullet points, if desired

3-Having the performance review conversation

During the performance review conversation, the manager and employee should:

- Review any agreed-upon “next steps” or commitments from the most recent performance conversation
- Review successes since the last conversation, making sure to identify specific results achieved
- Review any obstacles encountered since the last conversation. Why did they arise? What are some possible ways to deal with them?
- Establish SMART goals for moving forward (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound).

4-After the performance review conversation

Following the performance review conversation, the manager and employee should:

- Record notes from the meeting
- Reflect on how the meeting went and what you could do differently for future meetings
- Plan for follow-up discussion on any open issues and to check in on goals.

16 Empathetic performance review phrases to use in a support agent review

Your choice of words in a performance review comment can either build up your team or leave them demotivated, disengaged, or even confused! Here are some customer service performance review phrases to get you started.

Meets or exceeds expectations:

1. Exhibited genuine customer care by deliberately using empathy statements in all customer interactions.
2. Effectively handled tough customer service interactions for <task name>.
3. Maintains a warm rapport with coworkers and doesn't hesitate to ask for help to resolve customer issues collaboratively.
4. Expert in cross-functional collaboration to drive resolutions.
5. Actively listens and provides the necessary support in a minimal number of interactions, achieving an FCR rate of <n%>.
6. Quickly acknowledges customer concerns with an average first response time of <n%>.
7. Provides valuable suggestions for internal process improvements.
8. Stays calm and sensible even with difficult customers, achieving a happiness rating of <n> in <n%> of the tickets resolved.
9. Negotiated efficiently with <customer A> to arrive at a win-win solution for the customer and the business.
10. Provides polite and knowledgeable help, achieving high customer satisfaction scores of <n%>.

Needs improvement:

1. Must learn to be more calm and patient with angry customers.
2. Hesitant in extending help to coworkers for issue resolution.
3. Doesn't ask follow-up questions to gain more clarity in understanding customer problems.
4. Doesn't speak up in team meetings to share recommendations and opinions.
5. Should learn to say no politely yet firmly to certain customer demands.
6. Requires more domain knowledge to understand customer needs accurately.

Final thoughts

Customer support is an industry that suffers the most from a lack of alignment in terms of performance expectations and career growth. By aligning upwards and setting your team's expectations properly with measurable standards, you can set up a robust customer service performance evaluation process that enhances your work environment and shows a clear growth plan for your team.

To further boost agent performance and set them up for long-term success, you can empower them with robust, easy-to-use customer service software like Freshdesk. Agent-friendly features such as canned responses and in-ticket team huddles help provide speedy resolutions. You'll soon have a high-performing, incredible team of support agents focused on delighting customers and crushing it at their jobs.



Self-Check Quiz – 4.1.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What is a customer service performance review?

Question 2: Why is customer service performance review important?

Question 3: What is the Five Keys elements of Effective Performance Review Process?



Answer Key – 4.1.2

Answer 1:

A contact center performance review, also known as performance evaluation, is a structured employee feedback process to assess how a customer service agent has contributed to the business during a specific period, identifying their strengths and challenges for future opportunities and growth in their career.

Answer 2: Though assessing and scheduling review discussions regularly with your agents would take a big chunk of your time, the rewards of the process are manifold.

Boosts agent retention.
Engaged agents make happy customers.
Raises the game of your whole team.
Helps maintain a consistent and superior CX:
Map the right talent to the right support role

Answer 3: *The Five Keys elements of Effective Performance Review Process*

1. **Assessment:** Measure the results and progress against the agreed targets, standards and development plans.
2. **Feedback:** Invite the individual to share how they feel they are progressing and provide them with additional factual information on how they have been doing from a management perspective.
3. **Give positive reinforcement and constructive criticism:** Point out what's been done well so it can be maintained or improved upon; highlight areas for improvement.
4. **Exchange of views:** A good performance review involves a full and frank exchange on what's been achieved, the challenges involved, what needs to be done to achieve more, how individuals think and feel about their work, the way they are managed and their future.
5. **Agreement:** A joint understanding is required about what must be done by manager and staff to improve performance, develop knowledge, skills and capabilities. Work problems that are raised need to



Information Sheet 4.1.3

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to use performance management tools for contact center.

Performance management tools for contact center

Content Summary:

What is the performance management tools for contact center:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics
- Performance appraisals
- 360-degree feedback
- Management by objectives (MBO)
- Performance management frameworks
- Reward and recognition programs
- Personal development plans (PDP)

Basic Structure for Our Performance Management System.

- Metrics
- Quality Scorecards
- Training Modules

The Common Features of Performance Management Software.

Performance management helps organizations become more successful and stay ahead of the competition. It essentially involves measuring, reporting and managing progress in order to improve performance, both at an individual level, and at a corporate level. There are many, many performance management tools designed to make the process easier and more effective. Here I look at some of the most common tools.



Key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics

KPIs and metrics provide a way to measure how well companies, business units, projects or individuals are performing in relation to their strategic goals and objectives. But the primary value of KPIs is not in measurement per se, but in enabling rich data-driven performance conversations and better decision making. Measuring everything that moves provides little more than an illusion that performance is being managed. Instead, it's important to ask, "What goal will this KPI help my organization achieve, or what problem will it resolve?" and "What decisions will the KPI help drive?" Well-designed KPIs should be vital navigational instruments, giving a clear picture of current levels of performance and whether the business is where it needs to be.

Performance appraisals

Alongside KPIs, performance appraisals are probably the most commonly used performance management tool. When used properly, performance appraisals are incredibly powerful for aligning the goals of individuals with the strategic aims of the organization. To get the most out of this tool, however, employees must feel that the appraisal process is a regular, honest, fair and constructive two-way conversation. If not, appraisals can be a powerful de-motivator, leading to a decline in performance.

360-degree feedback

This tool is all about answering the question, “How well are our people performing in the eyes of those who have a stake in their performance?” It provides individuals with a broad assessment of their performance based on the views of those around them, including their supervisor or manager, direct reports, peers, customers, suppliers, and so on. Results are confidentially tallied and presented to the employee, usually by a manager. The insights from 360-degree feedback are typically used in employee training and development. Done well, 360-degree feedback helps to democratize the review process, by weighing the opinions of many people, instead of just the individual’s line manager.

Management by objectives (MBO)

MBO is the process of defining specific objectives and then setting out how to achieve each individual objective. It’s particularly powerful for specific work that needs to be done one step at a time, and is a great way to create a culture of working towards common goals. The idea is that, as each objective is achieved, those within the organization are aware of their achievements, which, in turn, boosts morale and motivation. MBO involves measuring individual performance and comparing it with standards that have been set.

Performance management frameworks

Without a doubt, one of the most popular and best-known management frameworks is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Voted one of the most influential business ideas ever presented in the Harvard Business Review, the BSC has been massively popular over the last 20 years. The BSC is a strategy execution tool that helps companies to:

- 1) clarify their strategy and communicate their business priorities and objectives;
- 2) monitor progress by measuring to what extent priorities and objectives are being delivered; and
- 3) define and manage action plans to ensure initiatives are in place to deliver the business’s priorities and strategic objectives.

Reward and recognition programs

When employees feel that good performance goes unrecognized and unrewarded, motivation plummets, and people disengage from the company’s overall mission. Reward and recognition programs are therefore an important part of any thorough performance management system, creating a method for celebrating those who are high performers. For many companies, this means dishing out financial rewards, such as bonuses, but simple praise and recognition of a job well done is just as important for maintaining morale and continued high performance.

Personal development plans (PDP)

A PDP is effectively a tailored action plan that is based on reflection and awareness of an individual’s performance and needs, setting out goals for future performance and actions that will support personal development. PDPs are often used to identify specific training and development needs and create an action plan for meeting those needs (for example, through specific courses or shadowing other employees). It helps individuals set out how they want to grow, and what actions they can take to achieve that growth. This not only helps the individual feel more invested in the company, and the role they play in its success, it also identifies concrete steps that can help drive individual performance in the future.

Investing in or developing performance management tools, techniques and processes like these, is an important part of creating a culture of high performance. And that’s exactly what every business, regardless of size, in every industry, should be aiming for – strong performance at every single level of the organization.

Do We Have a Basic Structure for Our Performance Management System?

Having a clear idea of what you want to do with a technology, before implementation, is important because you do not want to “retrofit” your performance management tool. You should have already created a structure for your contact center training program – both induction and continuous – and that will help you find the right tool for you.

For example, you might want to think about:

- **Metrics** – How will you track agent progress? Which metrics will you share with them? Will the performance management tool bring these to life through customized reporting, data visualization and gamification?
- **Quality Scorecards** – Have you assessed your most important customer satisfaction and business drivers to create scorecard criteria? Is there a definite overlap between scorecard criteria and your training modules? Will the performance management tool allow you to build the scorecard as you would like?
- **Training Modules** – What do you need to cover to meet business and customer outcomes? What online learning techniques – e.g. quizzes, videos etc. – will you use? Is it possible to structure these within this prospective performance management tool?

It is important that you analyse customer satisfaction and your key business outcomes, across all channels, to develop your training and quality assurance (QA) programmes. This will enable you to use your performance management tool to its maximum potential.

What is Performance Management Software?

Organizations use performance management software to establish standards based on organizational goals and then link employee job performance to these. The following list includes items to keep in mind when considering performance management software.

Needs and strategic goals — First and foremost, businesses should have a clear understanding of their current performance management workflows and what benefits they would like to receive from their performance management tool. Like most HR systems, performance management tools are not a one-size-fits-all solution; what works best for one company might not work at all for another. The effectiveness of a business’ performance management needs will depend on the existing structures within their departments and their particular goals.

Strategy — Businesses should make sure that their strategy is clearly outlined when speaking to vendors about potential products. This will help businesses ensure that the software they select will meet the unique requirements of their departments. They may also want to consider whether management would be willing to change their current management processes to adapt to a new software application. Implementing a new tool can be a good time to revisit old processes and determine whether making changes to accommodate a new solution might be the better choice.

Standalone or suite — Performance management products can operate as standalone products, or they can be incorporated into larger, more comprehensive HR management suites that manage other functions, such as payroll, recruiting, or eLearning. Whether businesses choose a standalone product or a suite will likely depend on their organization’s objectives, both for their performance management programs and for their human resources department as a whole. When considering suites, companies should keep in mind that the product may perform better in some departments than in others.

Customization — Effective performance management software can often be customized to fit the specific needs of an organization, whether through custom branding details or through tailored functionality. To ensure that the product will be a suitable fit for their employees and company, HR personnel should make sure that it either offers out-of-box functionality that fits the existing workflow of their organization or determine whether the solution can be customized or tailored to match their requirements.

Usability — When considering performance management products, it’s important to find one that will offer a positive user experience for staff members, employees, team leaders, and managers. A software

with a streamlined interface and simple navigation will help to increase user participation and make the performance management process more efficient.

Budget — Performance management software can vary in price, so companies need to understand their budget for purchasing these tools. As with other HR software systems, HR personnel will want to calculate the ROI for all solutions in consideration.

What are the Common Features of Performance Management Software?

Development planning — provides a platform in which managers can set performance expectations and give employees regular, quality performance feedback. These tools let managers identify skills that need to be developed and create a plan for tackling ongoing training and education.

Career succession planning — ensures that both employees and the organization understand the career path each employee is taking internally. This facilitates internal growth and development so employees can contribute as effectively as possible to the organization.

Performance tracking — provides management and employees with transparency into employee progress.

Goal management — Enables SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals to be aligned throughout the organization. Goals can be created and/or cascaded down by managers. Goal management functionality also facilitates the tracking of goal progress.

Reviews and feedback — Performance reviews can be created using templates or libraries. Performance management software simplifies the delivery of these review forms to employees. Reviews can come in the form of a mid-year review, annual performance review, 360-degree feedback, and a self-evaluation form, to name a few. Additionally, managers can employ their performance management toolkit to compare employees' performances to make promotion and compensation recommendations and decisions.

Succession planning — manages talent pool to ensure key individuals are being prepared for key roles.

Career and development planning — Helps managers and individuals identify career paths for employees as well as develop training programs and courses for competencies and certifications needed for career path movements.

Platform customization — Allows administrators and managers to customize the platform to accommodate their unique performance management processes. Includes the ability to create custom objects, fields, rules, calculations, and views within the platform.

API integration — Application programming interfaces, or APIs, typically enable integration of data, logic, objects, and such with other software applications. Some performance management solutions provide specifications for how they will communicate with other software.

User, role, and access management — Grants access to select data, features, objects, etc., based on the user, user role, or user group.

Performance and reliability — Ensures that software is consistently available (uptime), which allows users to complete tasks quickly because they do not need to wait for the software to respond to an action they took.

Reporting — enables reporting of all data contained within the system. Typically contains standard reports as well as the ability to create ad-hoc reports.

Dashboards — Generates an easy-to-read, often single page, real-time user interface that displays a graphical presentation of the current status and historical trends of an organization's key performance indicators (KPIs). Enables instantaneous and informed decisions to be made at a glance.



Self-Check Quiz – 4.1.3

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What is the performance management tools for contact center?

Question 2: What is a Basic Structure for Our Performance Management System?

Question 3: What are the Common Features of Performance Management Software?



Answer Key – 4.1.3

Answer 1:

Here I look at some of the most common tools.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics
Performance appraisals
360-degree feedback
Management by objectives (MBO)
Performance management frameworks
Reward and recognition programs
Personal development plans (PDP)

Answer 2: *Basic Structure for Our Performance Management System:*

- **Metrics** – How will you track agent progress? Which metrics will you share with them? Will the performance management tool bring these to life through customized reporting, data visualization and gamification?
- **Quality Scorecards** – Have you assessed your most important customer satisfaction and business drivers to create scorecard criteria? Is there a definite overlap between scorecard criteria and your training modules? Will the performance management tool allow you to build the scorecard as you would like?
- **Training Modules** – What do you need to cover to meet business and customer outcomes? What online learning techniques – e.g. quizzes, videos etc. – will you use? Is it possible to structure these within this prospective performance management tool?

Answer 3: The Common Features of Performance Management Software:

- Development planning
- Career succession planning
- Performance tracking
- Goal management
- Succession planning
- Reviews and feedback
- Platform customization
- Performance and reliability
- API integration
- Reporting
- Dashboards



Learning Outcome 4.2 - Apply Leadership Matrix



CONTENTS:

THE LEADERSHIP MATRIX: Guide Your Team to Better Results

THE LEADERSHIP MATRIX: Situational Leadership style.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Four ways to assess a team member's results are described.
2. Quadrants of Leadership matrix are interpreted.
3. Performance improvement techniques for different performance patterns are selected.
4. Performance patterns are placed into the four quadrants of the leadership matrix.
5. Different ways to lead and motivate are described.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Ingredients and relevant materials.
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities.
- Paper and Pen.



Learning Activities – 4.2

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
4.2 - Apply Leadership Matrix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 4.2.1 to 4.2.2 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 4.2.1 to 4.2.2 ▪ Answer Key: 4.2.1 to 4.2.2



Information Sheet – 4.2.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able recognize the Leadership Matrix and four ways to assess a team member's results.

THE LEADERSHIP MATRIX: Guide Your Team to Better Results

Content Summary:

Lead Inside the Box approach

The Leadership Matrix of 4 Quadrant performance pattern

1- Exemplars (High Output, Low Input)

- 1.1 Rising stars
- 1.2 Domain Masters

2- High-Cost Producers (High Output, High Input)

- 2.3 Stowaways
- 2.4 Joyriders

3- Detractors (Low Output, High Input)

- 3.5 Slackers
- 3.6 Square pegs

4- Passengers (Low Output, Low Input)

- 4.7 Steamrolls
- 4.8 Squeaky wheels

Do any of your team members demonstrate the following performance patterns?

- They produce great results and are easy to work with (*Exemplars*).
- They produce results but incur high costs (*High-Cost Producers*).
- They don't produce results but they don't get in the way (*Passengers*).
- They don't produce results and they drag you all down (*The Detractors*).

Here, We Learn how to address the unique development needs of different team members and determine how to best allocate your time as you help your employees improve their performance. Use the Leadership Matrix to Guide Your Team to Better Results. Followed by the book **Lead into the Box** written by **Victor Prince, Mike Figliuolo**, within this book, the performance matrix structure resides portraits of what each employee behavior type looks like and how they can best be led. By applying this behavior categorization method and implementing the suggested leadership strategies and techniques, leaders will be more effective in how they lead and how they invest their time and energy. Correspondingly, their team members will ultimately be more successful because the leader's approach is tailored to their individual needs.

Lead inside the Box approach

Every employee is different, but unfortunately many leaders use a **one-size-fits-all** approach to leading. In doing so, these otherwise well-intentioned leaders are working harder than they should while not getting all they could out of their teams.

Lead inside the Box gives leaders a way to get the best out of their teams by focusing their energy where it will make the biggest difference. A leader's time and energy is precious. It's a finite resource and must be invested wisely. The better you're able to determine where you're investing that time and energy, the more effectively you can lead your team.

This book teaches leaders how to:

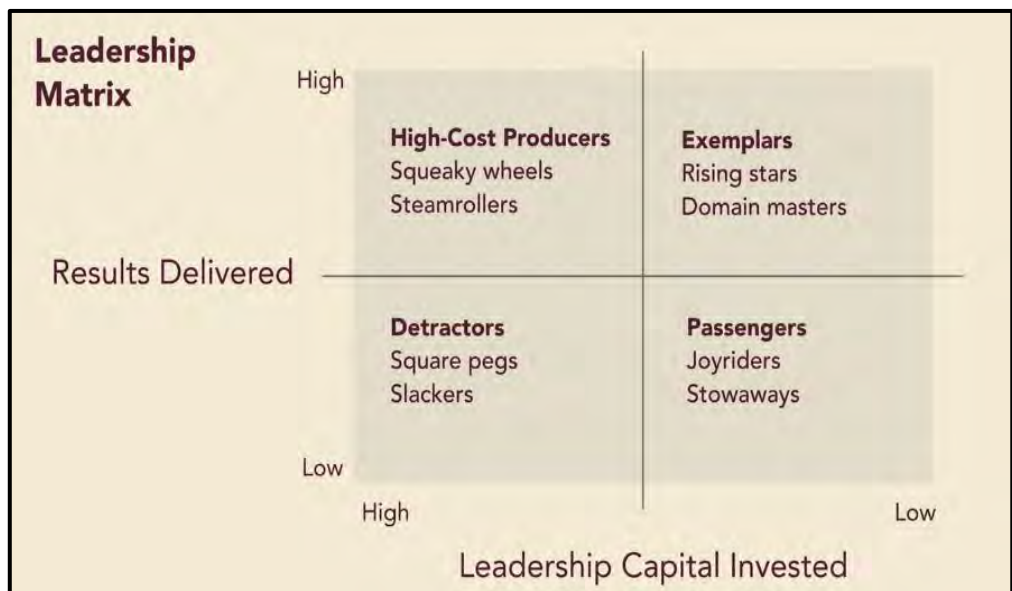
- Figure out where they are currently investing their time and energy across their teams
- Identify the unique leadership needs of each team member
- Make smarter decisions about how and where to invest their time and energy to get the best results



Through simple frameworks brought to life with stories from the trenches, leaders will be able to see their own teams—and themselves—from a new perspective. Paradoxically these methods will enable leaders to improve their team’s performance exponentially while expending half the effort. By understanding the behaviors your team members will demonstrate and how you invest (or don’t invest) your time and effort into them, you’ll get a clearer picture of **the 8 archetypical behaviors** that can show up in the box. With that understanding, you can begin leading differently which will improve your performance.

The Leadership Matrix

One of the biggest challenges leaders face is determining where to expend their limited time, focus, and energy. All too often, they spend a great deal of that **–leadership capital–** on people development efforts that yield limited results. Since time is a limited resource, one key element of improving a leader’s results is to change where they spend their time and how they focus their energy.



This leadership matrix provides leaders a method to get the most out of their teams by better focusing their leadership efforts and tailoring their approach to the unique needs of each individual team member. A simple framework in the form of a matrix that compares leadership inputs with employee outputs provides the structure for outlining four common types of employee behaviors that have widely different development needs. Each behavioral **–type–** comprises a **–box–** in the matrix. See the box below to learn more about that behavioral type and how you can better lead people in that category.

Within the above performance matrix structure reside portraits of what each employee behavior type looks like and how they can best be led. By applying this behavior categorization method and implementing the suggested leadership strategies and techniques, leaders will be more effective in how they lead and how they invest their time and energy. Correspondingly, their team members will ultimately be more successful because the leader’s approach is tailored to their individual needs.

We hear the phrase **“think outside the box”** a lot. If **“the box”** is something that is stifling creativity, it sounds like something to avoid. But when **“the box”** is a framework that smart leaders use to get better results from their teams, it is something to embrace.

Within that matrix, we define behavioral-performance patterns that team members demonstrate from Slackers to Rising Stars and everything in between. The real insight lies in practical advice on how to lead those folks to improve their performance. By understanding the behaviors your team members demonstrate and how you invest (or don't invest) your time and effort into them, you'll get a clearer picture of the 8 archetypical performance patterns that can show up in the box. With that understanding, you can begin leading your team members differently, which will improve your team performance.

4 Quadrant are as follows:

Exemplars – (High Output, Low Input)

Can be categorized based upon their career aspirations. Some Exemplars want their great performance to provide them a stepping stone to larger roles and responsibilities. These are the **“Rising Stars.”** Other Exemplars are content remaining in their current roles. They're experts and they're satisfied with delivering outstanding results without much interference from their boss. These individuals are the **“Domain Masters.”**

High-Cost Producers – (High Output, High Input)

Break into subtypes based on the kinds of costs they incur. Some get results but at the high cost of damaging team morale and destroying the goodwill you and your team have accrued with others. These individuals are the **“Steamrollers.”** High-Cost Producers who get results but require an inordinate amount of hand-holding from their leader to get them done are the **“Squeaky Wheels.”**

Detractors – (Low Output, High Input)

Detractors (Low output, high Input) are defined by the root cause of their performance issues. Some don't have the skills they need to do their job. These individuals are the **“Square Pegs.”** We call Detractors who have the skills to do the job but they lack the will to do it the **“Slackers.”**

Passengers (Low Output, Low Input) -

Subtypes are determined by the kind of output they produce. Some only work to get their paycheck. They expend the bare minimum amount of effort required to keep getting paid. These are the behaviors of your **“Stowaways.”** Other Passengers exert a great deal of energy but they focus on tasks they want to do, not tasks you need them to do. We refer to Passengers behaving this way as **“Joyriders.”**

Classify performance patterns into the four quadrants of the leadership matrix.

Once you have identified the behavioral-performance patterns present on your team, you will see your team in a new light. Armed with these new insights, you can figure out the specific type of leadership each team member needs from you to improve their performance. By seeing your team as a portfolio, you can also figure out where you should invest less of your time in some parts so you can shift it to invest more in other parts. In short, you will learn to get better results out of your team by working smarter, not harder, as a leader.

1	Rising Star	Someone who delivers great results and will be in line for future promotions
2	Domain Master	Someone who delivers great results and wants to stay in their current role for long- term
3	Squeaky Wheel	Someone who delivers great results but consumes a lot of the leader's time.
4	Steamroller	Someone who drives great results but at the expense of relationship and feelings.
5	Stowaway	Someone who doesn't deliver results but also doesn't create problems.

6	Joyrider	Someone who generate a lot of activity but delivers little in terms of actual result.
7	Square Peg	Someone who wants to perform well but lacks of skills and abilities to do so.
8	Slacker	Someone who has the capabilities to perform well but chooses not to apply themselves.

In following, we recall name the eight common performances patterns and categorize as per four quadrants in the Leadership Matrix,

Exemplars

Exemplars are the stars of your team who produce the best and most results while requiring little direction or supervision from you. Your overarching leadership goal for this box is retention. You want to keep these employees in your larger organization in roles best suited to unlocking their true potential. A leaders' time and energy, their "leadership capital," is scarce and they have to invest it intelligently across all their employees. Over time, you are going to **decrease** your investment of your leadership capital in this box in line with their self-sufficiency, and refocus what you are doing with that capital.

There are two types of people in this box based on how their current role fits their long-term personal career plans. Some Exemplars like their current role but are eager to continue advancing their careers. They view their current role as a stage to prove they are ready for the next level. We call them the "**Rising Stars**." Other Exemplars are completely content with their current job and are happy to stay in it. They are great at it and they love it... or at least love being great at it. Maybe it is perfect for them in how they see their career fitting into their overall life plans. These are your "**Domain Masters**."

Type 1 – "The Rising Stars" – The Rising Stars are fast rising talents. They have radically, and noticeably, improved how their jobs are done. Their excellent performance has been noticed by others and it is obvious these stars will be moving on to bigger and better things in the future.

Leadership Strategy – "Promote Internally" You acknowledge their reliable performance and reduce the amount of supervision you are providing them, thereby freeing up some of your leadership capital. Your goal should be to help them advance toward their career goals while retaining them in your larger organization.

Type 2 – "The Domain Masters" – The Domain Masters are amazing producers who never brag, rarely complain, and never seem to need any assistance or guidance. You feel extremely fortunate to have them on your team. You can always count on them to get their jobs done on-time and in a high quality way. Almost everyone loves working with them. The only people who don't are individuals who feel threatened by the Domain Master's outstanding performance. Other managers comment on how good these employees are. Some even try to recruit them to their teams. They enjoy their jobs, have been doing them well for years, and seem content to stay in them forever. They have found and mastered their domain.

Leadership Strategy – "Nurture in Place" Your goal is to ensure they feel valued and happy in their current role while also finding new challenges to help them continue to grow. Keeping your Exemplars happy and continually challenging them will give them the motivation and incentive they need to keep producing fantastic results while creating no worries for you.

High-Cost Producers

High Cost Producers carry more than their weight in delivering the team's results but also incur a lot of costs in doing so. Your overall leadership strategy for this box is reducing friction. Over time you are going to **reduce** the amount of your leadership capital you are investing in this box and you will change what you are doing with that capital. Just like organizations do not have unlimited capital to invest, leaders don't have unlimited time and energy to invest in leading their employees. Leaders' time and energy, their "leadership capital," is scarce and they have to invest it intelligently.

There are two types of people in this box. For some, the resources they require are tangible (staff, budget, or your time). These are "**Squeaky Wheels**." For others, the costs are less tangible things like team morale and goodwill. These are your "**Steamrollers**."

Type 1 – –The Squeaky Wheels” – Squeaky Wheels produce above average results but seem to consume an above average amount of resources to do it. They are regularly asking you for more budget and staff. They frequently need your help fixing problems and figuring out how to do their jobs.

Leadership Strategy – –Wean” – The goal with Squeaky Wheels is to get them to continue to deliver good results while reducing the resources they are consuming to get there. Make them less dependent on your help by making them figure out how to solve the problems they would often put in your lap.

Type 2 – –The Steamrollers” – Steamrollers produce results on par with Exemplars but they seem to make a lot more noise while delivering them. They barrel through any hurdles and step on a lot of toes as they get the job done. They may not even realize they are affecting others negatively. Other team members complain about the Steamrollers’ bad behavior and the favored treatment you give them simply because they get results irrespective of the cost of achieving them. You often have to help heal the bruises they leave behind on others. You can’t imagine losing them, but you wish they were a bit less high maintenance.

Leadership Strategy – –Reduce Friction” – The goal with Steamrollers is to continue to get the great results from them while reducing the toll their actions take on others.

Over time, you can reduce the amount of effort you’re having to spend on High-Cost Producers. In doing so, you should still get the same great results from them and have a lot more time and energy to invest in other members of your team.

Passengers

The Passenger fills a space on your organization chart but is not pulling their weight. Your overall leadership goal for this box is to increase the results you get from them. Over time, you are going to **increase** the amount of leadership capital you invest in this box to do that. A leaders’ time and energy, their **–leadership capital,**” is scarce and investing it wisely is critical.

There are two types of employees in this box and those types are driven by how engaged they are with their job. For some people, the job is a necessary evil they unfortunately have to endure to get a paycheck. They want to engage as minimally as possible to ensure they don’t stop getting that paycheck. These are your **–Stowaways.**” For others, they are highly engaged in the whole work experience, but they don’t necessarily like the work itself. They look for any excuse to do other things they enjoy more than their assigned tasks. These are your **–Joyriders.**”

Type 1 – –The Stowaways” – Stowaways show up to work. That’s about it. Not many people are sure what they do, but they appreciate that they don’t get in their way. They don’t talk much or bother you often but produce the bare minimum to stay out of trouble. They keep a low profile to avoid attention. They may travel or work remotely as much as they can. Managing them is like playing tennis with a wall – it seems like you have to do a lot of work to get something back from them. You are not sure whether they lack the skill or the will to deliver what you expect – all you know is they are not delivering. You find it is easier to do things yourself instead of asking them to do them.

Leadership Strategy – –Engage” – Your goal for leading Stowaways is to get more results from them to deliver on the expectations of the role they are occupying. You should increase the amount of time you spend with them discussing the responsibilities of the job and the support they need to do it. If they cannot improve their performance enough to meet your expectations, you should shift your focus to managing them out of that role so you can get someone in it who meets all the organization’s needs.

Type 2 – –The Joyriders” – Joyriders are highly engaged in the job – they enjoy coming to work and they bring a lot of energy to the office. They are social, always busy doing something, and letting people know how busy they are. They come up with all kinds of ideas of extracurricular activities to do at work and run with them in a visible, all-consuming way. The problem is you don’t see any real results in the main responsibilities they were hired to perform. In fact, it seems like their peers end up with bigger workloads because these individuals are busy with other self-identified activities and events.

Leadership Strategy – –Refocus” – The goal with Joyriders is to get them producing the results they were hired to do by keeping them focused on their core duties. You first want to assess why they are not focused on the right things. Reassign or stop the extracurricular duties they are working on by asking others on the team to take on some of those responsibilities. Structure your check-in meetings with the Joyrider by focusing the agenda on the core duties of their role and their progress in performing them.

Detractors

Detractors are not getting their job done and it is quite plain for all to see. Your overall leadership goal for this box is to quickly get them out of this box through rapid improvement, redeployment, or removal. Leaders' time and energy, their **–leadership capital,** is scarce and they have to invest it intelligently across all their employees. In the short term (2-3 months), you are going to **increase** your leadership capital investment in this box to make that move happen. This short-term investment pays off in the long term because you will reduce your time spent leading in this box.

There are two types of Detractors which are defined by the root cause of their poor performance. For some, they lack the skills to get the job done. They are in over their head or in the wrong job. These are your **–Square Pegs.** Some others may have the skills for the job but lack the will to apply themselves consistently. These are your **–Slackers.**

Type 1 – –The Square Pegs – Square Pegs are the 10 percent of your team that consume 90 percent of your leadership capital. They claim to work hard and long and make sure everyone knows it but don't get their jobs done despite that. You have to double-check on everything they do. Their work is often late, incomplete and sometimes flat-out wrong. You are still dealing with some of their past messes. The rest of the team tries to avoid working with them. You have come to realize they don't have the skills needed for the job they are in.

Leadership Strategy – –Fill Skill Gaps – Your goal is to get this person out of the Square Peg box in the short term, either by having them rapidly improve or by redeploying them to another job better suited to their skill set.

Type 2 – –The Slackers – The Slackers have all the required skills on paper and they did great in their job interviews for the role. However, since they got their jobs, their talents have not translated into the results you expected. They appear to be content knowing how to do the job instead of actually doing it. They seem to think that you are paying them for being smart instead of for being productive. You frequently have to push them and check on their progress in completing work. Your **–check ins** with them often feel like debates. They can talk the talk in meetings, which they think will make up for their failure to walk the walk outside of meetings.

Leadership Strategy – –Unlock Motivation – These are your potential high risk, high return leadership investments. Your goal is to get the people you hired to perform at the high levels of which they are capable. All that is holding them back is their motivation, so if you can figure out how to motivate them, you could receive a quick and possibly large return on that leadership investment.



Information Sheet – 4.2.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able recognize another Leadership Matrix of Situational leadership model represents four quadrants.

LEADERSHIP MATRIX: Situational Leadership style.

Content Summary:

Situational Leadership 4 Quadrant Model:

- Directing
- Coaching
- Supporting
- Delegating

Matching the Leadership Styles

Task/Directive Behavior

Relationship/Supportive Behavior

Flexible Leadership

We are all different. We come from different backgrounds, cultures and have varying degrees of experience. We come to the workplace with different motivations and often with emotional baggage. As leaders we must not only be aware of our own motivation for doing things (our WHY) but also be open to understanding others. Our role as leaders is to motivate and influence the followers, and you cannot do that if you don't know their preferred style of communicating or their preferred leadership style.

The Situational leadership model represents four quadrants. Each quadrant denotes a different leadership style, based on the follower:

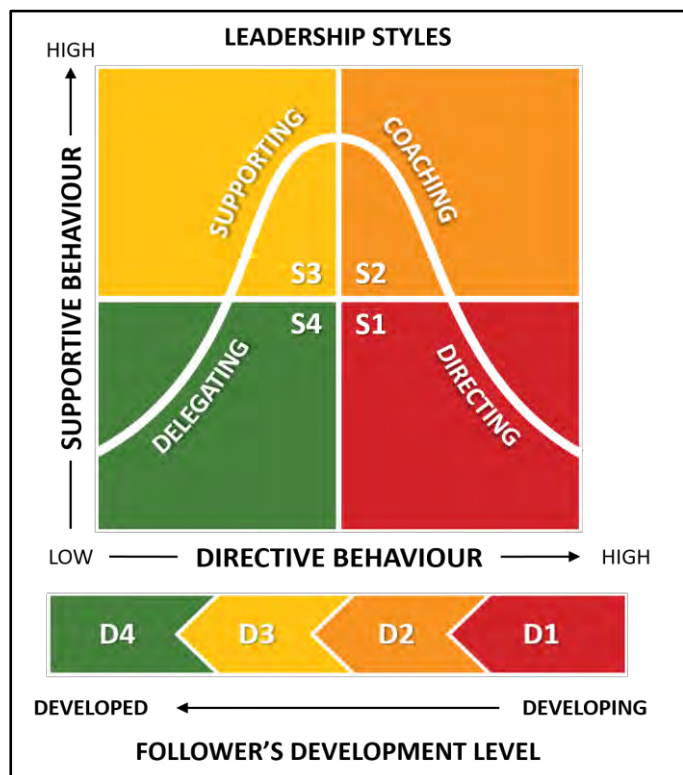
- Directing
- Coaching
- Supporting
- Delegating

Situational Leadership: Directing

In the Situational Leadership Model, *Directing* is the initial or basic level of leadership style. Nearly all new employees need a more directive style of leadership. They are very formative with little or no experience in their new roles. In the formative stage the follower is characterized by low competence and high commitment, the inability to comply, with possible feelings of insecurity.

As a leader, we need to pay high attention to tasks, rather than to the relationship with the direct report, as a relationship does not yet exist.

When a direct report can't do the job because they are unknowledgeable, the leader must spend much more time working with the employee, offering clear instructions and regular follow up. It's all about encouraging and motivating at this point: celebrating positive results and offering suggestions and remedial actions for less positive results. The idea is to motivate the follower to rise to the next level of their ability. **This is a very leader-driven stage.**



Situational Leadership: Coaching

Coaching is for followers who have developed some competence along with an improved commitment. The follower is not totally confident in their abilities but is getting there.

At this point the leader still needs to focus on tasks, which can still require significant commitment of time, but the focus can now expand to the developing relationship with the employee, building on the trust that has begun to develop and the encouragement that has been demonstrated. Again, the leader needs to spend significant time listening and offering advice.

The goal is to engage the follower so they can develop to the next level. There is less “telling” and more “suggesting,” which leads to more encouragement, acting as a coach. The recognition that they have progressed motivates them to progress even further. **This is still a very leader-driven stage.**

Situational Leadership: Supporting

Supporting employees who are now competent at the job, but remain somewhat inconsistent and are not fully committed yet. The follower may be uncooperative or performing as little work as possible, despite their competence with the tasks.

The leader must participate with, and support the follower. The leader no longer needs to give detailed instructions nor to follow up as often, but does need to continue to check in to make sure that the work is being done at the required level.

The follower is now highly competent, but is not yet convinced in his or her ability or not fully committed to do their best and excel. The leader must now focus less on the tasks assigned and more on the relationships among the follower, the leader, and the group. This is a very follower-driven, relationship-focused stage.

Situational Leadership: Delegating

The ultimate goal is Delegating: to create a follower who feels fully empowered and competent enough to take the ball and run with it, with minimal supervision. The follower is highly competent, highly committed, motivated, and empowered.

As a leader you can now delegate tasks to the follower and observe with minimal follow up, knowing that acceptable or even excellent results will be achieved. There is a low focus on tasks and a low focus on relationships. There is no need to compliment the follower on every task, although continued praise for outstanding performance must be given as appropriate. **This is a very follower-driven stage.**

Matching the Leadership Styles

The different leadership styles in situational leadership theory, range from S1 to S4 and vary in the level of leadership involvement direction involved.

This level of direction and control and ultimately, the correct leadership style to use, is understood by mapping the ‘Development Level’ (D1 to D4) of the team or individuals against one of the quadrants.

In other words, by asking, how competent the team/individual is at completing the task at hand, one can gauge a level from D1 to D4 in maturity. This then allows the leader to pick the correct style to suit the team / individual’s competency levels, by matching the appropriate leadership style to their development levels.

The diagram:

- ✓ **D1 task maturity is mapped to S1 leadership style**
- ✓ **D2 task maturity is mapped to S2 leadership style**
- ✓ **D3 task maturity is mapped to S3 leadership style**
- ✓ **D4 task maturity is mapped to S4 leadership style**

Using the Situational Leadership Model

Situational Leadership is a common-sense, contingency-based leadership model that consists of four common leadership styles. Two points of clarification in that regard:

1. Unfortunately, “common sense” is anything but “common practice.”

2. –Contingency-based” basically means the correct answer to the question:
 - a. “What is the best leadership style?”
 - b. Answer: **It depends!**

A Situational Leader employs one of four leadership styles that provide him or her with the highest probability of success in every *situation* they encounter. Those situations are a function of the *task* that needs to be performed, in conjunction with the task-related ability and willingness of *the follower* identified to perform it. Based on the objective assessment of those parameters, and with the responsibility of successfully and effectively influencing the follower, the leader responds to the situation with one of four leadership styles.

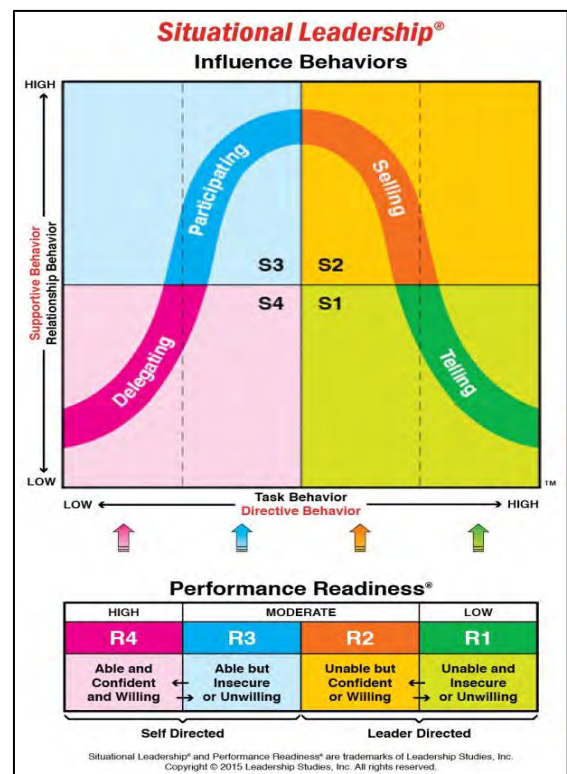
Those styles are operationally defined by *Task/Directive Behavior and Relationship/Supportive Behavior*:

- **Task/Directive Behavior** – the extent to which the leader tells the follower *what* to do, *how* to do it, *where* it needs to be done and *when* it needs to be completed
- **Relationship/Supportive Behavior** – the extent to which the leader engages in open dialog with the follower, actively listens and provides recognition/reinforcement for task-related progress

STYLE 1– TELLING, DIRECTING or GUIDING

- Style 1 or a telling leadership style, is characterized by the leader using moderate to high amounts of Task Behavior and moderate to low amounts of Relationship Behavior. The leader makes decisions surrounding the timely completion of the task and provides the follower with the benefit of his/her experience in that regard. The flow of communication is **from** the leader **to** the follower. Questions posed by the leader are typically focused on clarity (.e.g. –Do you have any questions on the instructions we’ve just reviewed?”).

Style 1 is a short-term approach intended to *create movement*. It aligns with followers who have limited (if any) experience or skill performing the task in question and (for whatever reason) are either insecure or unmotivated to try. Style 1 requires close supervision by the leader for the express purpose of identifying any signs of incremental progress (to be recognized by the leader in an effort to accelerate ongoing development).



STYLE 2 – SELLING, COACHING or EXPLAINING

- Style 2 or a selling leadership style, describes a leadership approach that is high on both Task and Relationship Behavior. The leader still maintains decision rights regarding **what** the follower needs to be doing, **how** they should be doing it and **when** it needs to be completed, but that structure is provided in combination with ample opportunity for discussion of **why** the task is important and **where** it fits into the overall scheme of operation. The leader also actively recognizes the enthusiasm, interest and commitment of the follower for learning and gaining task-related experience.

Style 2 is intended to *create buy-in and understanding*. It aligns with followers who have limited (if any) experience performing the task but exude both confidence and motivation toward the process of leader-driven skill development. Like Style 1, effective use of this approach depends upon direct observations by the leader, which fuel focused performance feedback discussions and increased dialog.

STYLE 3 – PARTICIPATING, FACILITATING or COLLABORATING

- Style 3 or a participating leadership style, is fundamentally different from Styles 1 and 2 in that it is “follower driven” as opposed to “leader driven.” As such, it depicts an approach that is high on Relationship Behavior but low on Task Behavior. In that context (and from the leader’s perspective), the follower has the ability to perform the task in question at a sustained and acceptable level but lacks either the confidence or the motivation/commitment to do so.

The objective of Style 3 is to *create alignment*. If the follower is developing, he/she might have demonstrated task proficiency but still have some degree of trepidation about performing it on their own. If the follower is regressing, they are aware they can effectively perform but have lost commitment, motivation (or both) to do so. Either way, the leader needs to discuss the follower’s willingness by asking open-ended questions intended to help the follower recognize the source of the performance challenge and generate a viable solution.

STYLE 4 – DELEGATING, EMPOWERING or MONITORING

- Style 4 or a delegating leadership style, is another “follower-driven” leadership approach that is characterized by low amounts of both Task and Relationship Behavior. The follower can perform the task at a sustained and acceptable level and is both confident and motivated to do so.

The intent of Style 4 is to *create/enhance task mastery and autonomy*. It aligns with followers that have significant experience performing the task at or above expectation, in combination with a level of intrinsic motivation that drives their ongoing commitment to excellence. The flow of communication with Style 4 is **from** the follower **to** the leader and is typically initiated by questions from the leader that feature significant degrees of freedom (e.g. “From your perspective, what is working and what do we need to consider doing differently moving forward?”).

Based on your own experience as a leader (and as a follower), consider that the most inconsistent thing a leader can do is to treat everybody the same. A leader’s approach should be dictated by the nuances of each situation they encounter. Situational Leadership is a practical, repeatable model that helps leaders do just that!

Flexible Leadership is Key

Growth and productivity effectively have a symbiotic relationship with good leadership. To get the best out of a team, the situational leadership theory suggests that a leader must understand to manage people effectively with reference the tasks they are set and their level of competency. It is clear that flexibility is critical for effective leadership to take place. As with the definition of leadership, the critical thing to do is to lead and manage individuals effectively so they can work in harmony with the team and achieve the objectives set.

“The Situational Leadership® Model provides leaders with an understanding of the relationship between an effective style of leadership and the level of readiness followers exhibit for a specific task”.
<https://situational.com/>



Activity Sheet 4.2.1

Select appropriate performance improvement techniques for eight performance patterns.

Method of Preparation:

You can use our simple [online quiz](#) to assess your team using this framework. On the following link-
[Assessment \(leadinsidethebox.com\)](#)

Specification Sheet:

To build the leadership matrix, you're going to draw a 2x2. On that 2x2 matrix, on the horizontal axis, go ahead and write Leadership Capital Invested. On the left side of that axis, go ahead and write High, and on the right side of the axis, write Low. On the vertical axis of the 2x2, write Team Member Results. In the bottom half, write Low, and in the upper half, write High. You're then going to plot your team members on the matrix. Now, remember, high leadership capital invested goes on the left-hand side of the matrix and low goes on the right side.

Job Details:

After assessing where you're investing your leadership capital and the return you're getting on that investment, in terms of team member performance, it's important to think about how you might reallocate your leadership capital. You might want to invest more in those people who are struggling and invest less time and energy on those people who don't need it because they're delivering great results. Use the leadership matrix to assess this return on investment.

The leadership matrix is a picture of where you're investing your time and energy, and the results you're getting from that investment. You'll plot your team members on it and get an understanding of how you should be leading them.

For each quadrant on the leadership matrix, it's going to describe a performance pattern. The most desirable pattern to put people in is in the upper right, where you're investing very little leadership capital and you're getting great results from those people. Your goal is to get your people into that upper right box. In each of the quadrants of the leadership matrix, you're going to see performance patterns; they're going to be profiles of the members of your team. In the upper right quadrant, where you're investing very little leadership capital but getting a lot of great results, those are your exemplars, they're your high-performers. You're going to find your rising stars and your domain masters up there. In the lower right, where you're investing very little leadership capital but you're not getting very much in the way of results, those people are your passengers; they're your joyriders and your stowaways. In the lower left corner of the leadership matrix, you've got your detractors. You're putting in a lot of time and energy and you're not getting any results. These are your square pegs and your slackers. And then in the upper left corner of them matrix, you're going to have your high-cost producers. You're putting in a lot of time and energy, but you're still getting great results out of them. These are your squeaky wheels and your steamrollers.

The leadership matrix provides clarity on where and how to invest your time and energy. It suggests a tailored leadership tactic to improve individual results. This is not about putting people in boxes, it's about changing performance. To change performance, you need to change their behaviors, and you might have to change yours, as well.

Taking this method forward requires you to assess all the members of your team, and place them in the appropriate box on the Leadership Matrix. Once you know what performance pattern you're dealing with for each person, lay out a plan for how you're going to change the way you invest your leadership capital with them, and what path you want them to take to get to a higher level of performance. For your rising stars and domain masters, focus on retention and growth. For stowaways and joyriders, increase the time and attention you give them to drive accountability and performance. For your slackers, figure out how to motivate them. If you have square pegs, focus on building their skills. For your steamrollers, get them to appreciate relationships as well as results. And for squeaky wheels, make them more independent. Taking an individualized approach to the way your people are performing, then spending your time and energy accordingly will get you better results while giving you back your precious time and energy.



Activity Sheet- 4.2.2

Describe different ways to lead and motivate associates within the eight different performance patterns.

Method of Preparation:

Specification Sheet:

To build the leadership matrix, you're going to draw a 2x2. On that 2x2 matrix, on the horizontal axis, go ahead and write Leadership Capital Invested. On the left side of that axis, go ahead and write High, and on the right side of the axis, write Low. On the vertical axis of the 2x2, write Team Member Results. In the bottom half, write Low, and in the upper half, write High. You're then going to plot your team members on the matrix. Now, remember, high leadership capital invested goes on the left-hand side of the matrix and low goes on the right side.

Job Details: Movement on the leadership matrix

As people's performance changes and as leaders change their approach to leading the members in their team, people will move on the leadership matrix. They'll demonstrate new performance patterns. This isn't about putting people in static boxes, it's about understanding how they change and grow and evolve over time. Knowing how you want to move someone and being able to track their progress as performance changes, enables you to change your approach to leading that individual. Moving people through boxes helps your team evolve. You may take new people into the team and move them toward higher output quadrants of the leadership matrix. For example, you may have a rising star on your team who's delivering great results and doesn't require a lot of your time. As you try to develop them, move them to a role where there's more responsibilities. Now when you do that, you may find that that rising star just became a square peg. They don't have the skills yet to deliver great results. And the leader is going to have to invest more time helping that individual grow and succeed. You may have detractors on your team who aren't improving. In that situation, you may move them out of your organization and into another one where they can be more successful. Remember, the leadership matrix is dynamic.

People don't just get put in a box and left there. You're going to change your approach, your people will change their performance. They're going to move on the leadership matrix. Track their performance over time so you can see if your approach to how you're leading your team members is working. Use the leadership matrix as a tool to determine how you want to interact with the members of your team and how you should see their performance change over time.

leadership capital:	Identify:	Apply Leadership Strategy:
Exemplars	Rising stars	Grow rising stars
	Domain masters	Retain domain masters
Passengers	Stowaways	Drive stowaway performance
	Joyriders	Focus joyriders
Detractors	Slackers	Motivate slackers
	Square pegs	Develop square pegs
High-Cost Producer	Steamroller	Reduce steamroller friction
	Squeaky wheels	Wean squeaky wheels



Activity Sheet- 4.2.3

Assess a new team

Method of Preparation:

Specification Sheet:

To build the leadership matrix, you're going to draw a 2x2. On that 2x2 matrix, on the horizontal axis, go ahead and write Leadership Capital Invested. On the left side of that axis, go ahead and write High, and on the right side of the axis, write Low. On the vertical axis of the 2x2, write Team Member Results. In the bottom half, write Low, and in the upper half, write High. You're then going to plot your team members on the matrix. Now, remember, high leadership capital invested goes on the left-hand side of the matrix and low goes on the right side.

Job Details:

The leadership matrix can help you develop your team members in a lot of different situations. You can use it to assess a new team, you can use it in hiring, and succession planning activities. You can plan team member development or even reorganizations based on the results of the leadership matrix assessment. To assess a new team ask the team's prior manager about individual performance. Also ask them who consumed the majority of their time and energy and why they were consuming it. Do your initial assessment on the leadership matrix based on that input. Then, conduct your own assessment after two months to see how you might have to change your approach to how you're leading the members of your team. For hiring use their resume and the interview to gauge what the individual's results might be on your team. Also, ask them what their work style is. Find out how they interacted with their last boss in order to assess how much leadership capital the individual might take up from you. For succession planning focus on getting your rising stars ready for their next role. Also look at your square pegs, per how you might redeploy them or find more appropriate positions for them on the existing team. In terms of development and reorganization activities, make moves based on motivating your slackers. You may try and find better fits for your square pegs. And, create opportunities for your rising stars. The leadership matrix can inform all of these people development activities. Building the leadership matrix into your talent development processes will focus your limited time in ways that are going to generate the greatest results.



Learning Outcome 4.3 - Create a Contact Center Quality Scorecard



CONTENTS:

CONTACT CENTER QUALITY ASSURANCE: Concept, Types and Key Elements

HOW TO CALIBRATE QUALITY SCORES: Eight Recommended Process

BALANCED SCORECARD: To Track Performance



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Key areas of Quality Assurance are described for contact center service.
2. Scores are collected from Quality Assurance Team.
3. Scores are measured and inserted in the Quality Monitoring Scorecard.
4. Meetings are arranged to remove subjectivity by calibrating quality scores.
5. Balanced scorecard is aligned with organization's four "perspectives" strategy.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ingredients and relevant materials
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities
- Paper and Pen



Learning Activities – 4.3

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
4.3 - Create a Contact Center Quality Scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 ▪ Answer Key: 4.3.1 to 4.3.3



Information Sheet – 4.3.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Create a Contact Center Quality Scorecard that will strengthen contact center performance.

CONTACT CENTER QUALITY ASSURANCE: Concept, Types and Key Elements

Content Summary:

What is quality assurance?

What is contact center quality assurance?

The Importance of Quality Assurance in the Contact Center

What is a contact center quality assurance framework?

What is a QA Scorecard? And Why you need a QA scorecard?

Developing a Contact Center QA scorecard with following 6 key parameters:

1-The Three Key Elements of Quality Assurance

Customer,
Company and
Engagement.

2.The Key Scorecard Metrics

3. How to produce evaluation forms that deliver.

4. The latest quality monitoring trends.

5. Quality assurance best practices.

6. Creating quality reports that hit the mark.

Step 1: Determine who will see the reports.

Step 2: Define your reporting requirements.

Step 3: Present the information in the best possible light.

According to Microsoft's Global State of Multichannel Customer Service Report 2017, an eye-watering 97% of consumers say that customer service is crucial to retaining their loyalty.

You can be instrumental in helping to improve the overall customer experience (CX) by readdressing your contact center quality assurance process. A consistent quality assurance process has the power to:

- ✓ Enhance agent performance.
- ✓ Increase operational efficiency.
- ✓ Most importantly, elevate that all-important CX.

This information sheet has been created to ensure your contact center quality assurance process is following best practice, and will equip you with everything you need. By the time you have read this information sheet, you will have at your fingertips all the information you need to create a quality monitoring process that drives continual improvement in customer experience and your contact center.

What is quality assurance?

Quality assurance (often abbreviated to QA) is the act of ensuring your various services are meeting (or exceeding) the standards of quality you've set out for them. This often includes monitoring and evaluating customer service calls, chats, and other interactions between your agents and your customers.

Quality assurance assessment ensures the day-to-day compliance of your team with legal and company regulations, but it's also how you can guarantee that your team is offering what you consider to be a "quality" service in a way that's standardized, measurable, and replicable.

You can think of quality assurance (and quality management) as a formalized way to guarantee strong customer retention through high-quality, consistent service provision

Difference between Quality Control (QC), Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Management (QM):

Confused about the difference between QA, QM, and QC? In short, QA and QC are tactical, tick-box evaluations of processes, while quality management describes the bigger, more overarching risk assessment themes, trends, and strategies within an organization.

And while quality assurance is generally focused on how processes are performed, or how service is delivered – for example, agent performance in contact centers – quality control focuses on the prevention of mistakes. Usually, that's through the creation and ongoing evaluation of QC policies.

Usually, your quality assurance function will have a “checklist” of standards to mark services against. In a contact center, for example, that would be key performance indicators like script compliance and customer success.

Quality control, on the other hand, is focused on the evaluation and management of quality for products – usually during the development process. It focuses on correcting issues, such as product defects, and is concerned with carrying out a quality audit and taking corrective action, rather than deciding what checks need to be made.

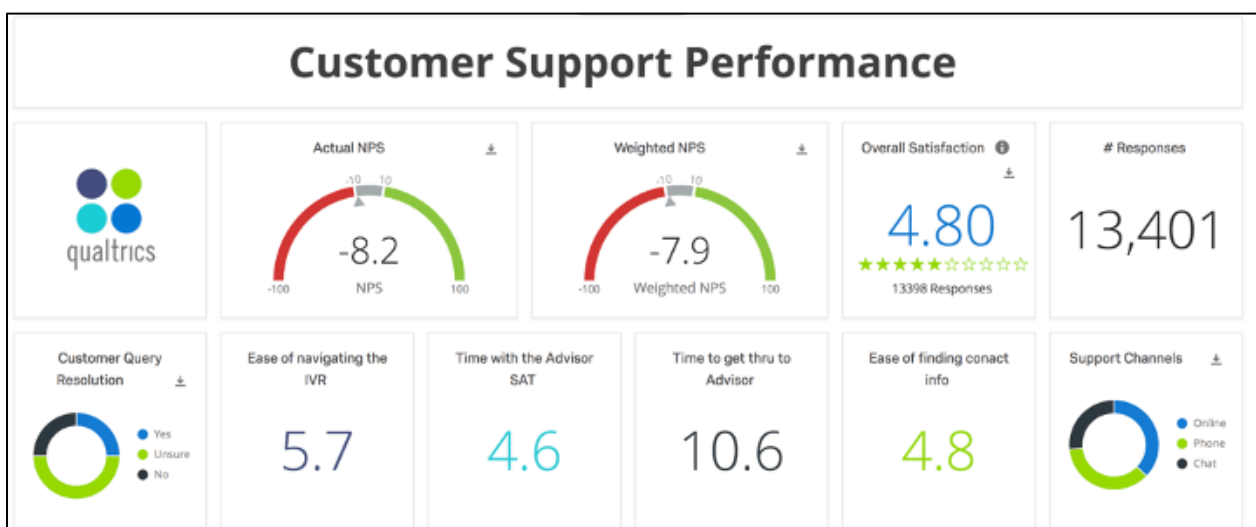
Quality management sits over the top of both, analyzing how quality standards can be formalized and maintained.

What is contact centre Quality Assurance (QA)?

In this section, we are going to focus on contact center quality assurance in particular – the what, why, and how. In that setting, quality assurance refers to the act of monitoring every customer interaction your contact center has, and using a defined process to improve the customer experience.

In simple terms, that means call monitoring, call scoring, and using software that can track and determine qualitative values like sentiment to help guide and improve your contact center (and your agents’) performance.

But quality assurance in contact centers can also have operational benefits, as well as customer experience ones. For instance, your contact center quality assurance program might produce data highlighting the fact that staffing needs to be ramped up or wound down at certain times, or that customer demand peaks at specific times of the day, month, or year. In general, contact center quality assurance is all about tightening the various nuts and bolts of your contact center, fine-tuning agent performance, and delivering more positive customer interactions.



Quality assurance (QA) in contact centers is a process that ensures you are performing according to the standards of your company. This is done by monitoring and evaluating your team based on the key performance indicators (KPIs) that you have set. Different businesses have different goals, so you must make sure that your KPIs are aligned with your particular goals. It's also referred to as quality management by some companies.

The Importance of Quality Assurance in the Contact Center

But you can't determine how well your contact center is performing—how happy your customers are—without a quality assurance process.

Quality assurance is essential for:

- evaluating agent performance and training your contact center agents
- increasing operational efficiency
- collaborating internally and externally
- elevating the customer experience
- ensuring that your customer interactions are aligned with your business goals

With quality assurance in place, you can drastically improve almost every aspect of your contact center and make better decisions. The problem is knowing what to monitor, measure, and improve.

The Challenges of Contact Center QA

There is a massive amount of data that can be collected and associated with contact center QA, and there are many methods for collecting that data. The main problem is that there are very few ways to collect that data without the need for significant resources.

Few contact centers have data-collection technology, skills, and time required to dedicate to managing contact center performance and quality. In fact, for 37% of companies, lack of time to collect and analyze data is the biggest struggle when it comes to QA. Following close behind are not enough time and resources to coach and train people on how and what to collect (31%) and a lack of technology (25%).

The large amount of QA metadata available, combined with its complexity, means that it can be difficult for teams to interpret and create actionable improvements. It's too easy to get lost in the data instead of taking a step back and looking at the big picture.

That's why a contact center quality assurance framework is so essential.

CONTACT CENTER QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) FRAMEWORK

A contact center QA framework is a set of success criteria and metrics that you use to measure and manage your quality of service. Think of it as a guide to monitoring your contact center and analyzing the results.

The right framework can help you define your key performance indicators, identify goals, and pinpoint how you can obtain the most strategic long-term value from your contact center. The appropriate QA framework can essentially determine where your contact center is headed and how you're going to get there.

The key is to develop the most effective QA framework for your contact center, which means taking an in-depth look at your customer service goals as well as the processes and tools you have in place.

Today, we're going to delve into the contact center quality assurance process and look at how you can implement a QA framework in your call or contact center.

What is a contact center quality assurance framework?

A contact center QA framework provides critical metrics and success factors that help you measure, review and improve customer service. Your QA framework acts as a guideline of excellence, empowering people to understand what 'great' looks like and how to achieve it.

Based on tangible key performance indicators (KPIs) that stakeholders can easily understand, your framework should also use data and feedback from customers to drive continuous improvement.

There are a variety of things you need to consider at the outset of your QA journey, including:

- What data should I measure?
- How will we monitor our agents' communications?
- What tools will we use to analyze communications data?
- What does 'good' customer service look like?
- How will we assess the sentiment of our customers as they engage with us?
- How will we turn our data insights into actionable improvements?

One thing that these questions make very clear is that the right digital tools are central to a great QA framework. In the time-pressed contact center environment, it's impossible to manually review all agent-customer conversations and provide feedback.

Instead, managers and team leaders need an analytical solution that listens and reviews conversations, generating insights that can easily be compared against predefined metrics.

Types of quality assurance framework

By establishing a QA workflow and framework, you will set your contact center up for success by making it scalable and repeatable. It will also provide your agents, team leaders, and managers with guidelines for handling customer interactions. But that requires you to understand the three types of QA frameworks and where your contact center fits in the evolutionary process of creating a framework that is best for your organization, now and into the future.

Most contact center QA frameworks can be categorized into **operational, tactical, or strategic**, depending on your organization's readiness through these evolutionary levels of maturity. The more evolved the framework, the more it looks at the overall view of your contact center, and the more it will help you overcome challenges and uncover growth opportunities.

Almost every contact center is in one of the following QA phases or in some blend of operational, tactical, and strategic. The key is to be able to identify where your contact center currently is on this continuum, and then to determine the necessary next steps to evolve to the next level.

To help you do that, let us first take a look at the different QA frameworks:

1. Operational QA framework

Almost every contact center begins with an operational QA framework. This is the essential starting point because it supports the processes and workflows that are at the core of every contact center. We're talking about the nuts and bolts of getting the job done on a day-to-day basis.

An operational QA framework and its associated metrics can support moving your contact center from point A to point B in an efficient and customer-centric way. It does this by relying on consistency, which means that you are most likely:

- ✓ measuring QA as part of your daily processes
- ✓ using QA primarily to identify poor performers
- ✓ trying to meet a quota of scores by staff each month
- ✓ performing evaluations monthly

Unfortunately, where this framework fails is that it can be difficult for contact centers to take their metrics and **transform them into actionable insights**. Contact centers with an operational framework often do not have time or resources to analyze their QA data to gain the customer insights that they need. This can result in QA that is far less meaningful than it should be.

While an operational framework is a good place to begin, there are countless missed growth opportunities. The next step is to evolve into a tactical QA framework.

2. Tactical QA framework

A tactical contact center framework goes beyond daily customer service goals to address more medium-term goals tailored by channel. It allows you to pivot and adapt your quality assurance processes based on your data. The goal is to move the quality needle in a positive direction.

In a tactical QA framework, your contact center would focus on:

- ✓ improving client retention
- ✓ identifying the root causes of poor customer service
- ✓ determining broken processes and workflows
- ✓ highlighting knowledge gaps
- ✓ reducing staff churn by investing time and money in staff training
- ✓ reporting on trends—month-over-month or year-over-year data.

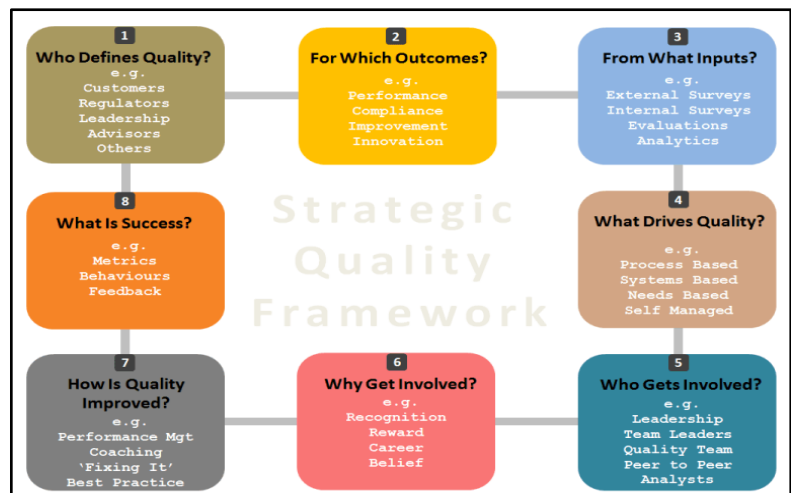
These are all tactical goals and actions that are focused on growth and scalability in your contact center. It's not just about delivering consistent service, but a **better quality** of service, which requires tactical self-awareness. This could involve creating a unified QA dashboard for pertinent analyses, analyzing data in real time, and implementing self-scoring for contact center agents.

A tactical framework requires more foresight on behalf of your contact center team for bigger-picture thinking. However, it's still not entirely transformative and strategic. It doesn't take into account all critical influences on your contact center—the business, the customer, the client, and the agent. It delivers pockets of value, but could go one step further, and that's where a strategic framework is invaluable for continued growth and opportunities.

3. The Strategic QA Framework

A strategic QA framework is focused on the long-term impact of your contact center. It takes a top-down approach, where senior leadership influences your contact center goals and culture. It aims to seamlessly set QA standards, measurements, and collaboration amongst all elements of your business.

A strategic QA framework requires a different structure for your contact center. You must be set up to analyze, interpret, and share data that departs from operational practices. Instead, data and measurements must be about your overall business's strategic goals and objectives, which is why it's a key differentiator and selling point for shareholders.



In a strategic QA workflow, your focus would be to:

- ✓ Improve your Net Promoter Score (NPS) by understanding the connection between customer service, customer sentiment, and QA.
- ✓ Increase customer loyalty beyond first-time interactions.
- ✓ Enhance your customers' propensity to purchase by examining the impact of customer service on sales.
- ✓ Use quality assurance as a differentiator.

When you implement a strategic QA framework, you move away from basic quality assurance scores and instead focus on actionable behaviors. However, your contact center should only evolve to a strategic framework after you have mastered both the operational and tactical levels. You have to have the basics down—measuring the right data and delivering business results—before you can shift to this new strategic culture.

In a strategic workflow, it's less about micromanaging and more about mutual understanding and respect where your management team listens to your agents and evolves with them. This ultimately results in happier contact center representatives and thus happier customers.

What is a QA Scorecard?

A Quality Assurance Scorecard (or QA scorecard) is just what it sounds like: it's a tool used by a QA analyst, Team Leader, or Manager to measure and grade the quality of your contact center agent's customer interaction skills. In other words, it is a checklist of questions you will use to assess your agents' strengths and weaknesses and to pinpoint issues and areas to improve. Ideally, you should base the content around your company's values and how those values are applied to all customer service interactions. After all, customer experience is increasingly important. It plays a pivotal role in whether customers do business with you, and if they are not happy, 58% of customers will just go elsewhere.

Does your contact center use quality assurance (QA) Scorecards to manage agent performance?

QA Scorecard for contact center agent quality assurance is simply an organized and collaborative method for evaluating agent performance.

Why you need a QA scorecard

Often, contact center agents are the only direct contact customers will have with your company. Contact center employees are the voice of your company, and as such, they are vitally important to your success.

You need a QA scorecard to measure what you deem important in customer interactions. You can use them to measure and improve agent performance and as a customer service coaching tool. When you examine your data, you'll glean insights that will help you improve customer experience strategy as a whole, from hiring and training agents all the way through to improving customer CSAT scores and NPS—or whatever KPIs your contact center targets.

It will help you retain employees too—agents will be more likely to be successful which will help them feel more satisfied within their jobs. It's unsurprising that organizations that value employee morale show increased performance and increased profits.

What benefits do QA scorecards offer?

Customers generally call for one of two reasons: to complain and to find a resolution to a problem. You will need to make sure your agents can make the customer feel heard, and only after that, move on to resolving the problem.

Your QA scorecard will be able to pinpoint what your agent did right and what they did wrong in tricky customer interactions. This will help them to build skills for the next time someone calls to complain. It can also cut the amount of time it takes to resolve issues so that they can move on to other callers.

A well-designed QA scorecard will also allow you to gather data so you can improve training and run coaching sessions more effectively. If most contact center agents have difficulty with resolving one type of issue, you'll know you need to address that better during onboarding.

Ask your contact center agents what they believe are the most important skills for delivering good customer service. This will both help your agents feel valued, and it could give you some ideas on what to target in the future.

With that, here are the steps to create an effective QA scorecard in Contact center.

How to develop a QA scorecard?

While it may seem logical and easy to add a bundle of KPIs to a scorecard and start measuring, the first step to developing a QA scorecard is determining the purpose of the scorecard itself.

Start the creation process by answering this single question: What is your endgame with using scorecards?

Focusing on the scorecard's overall purpose will help determine what ultimately needs to be measured and improved and thus make the results much more valuable. Once this first critical question is answered, there are several steps to take in ensuring the scorecard is balanced, fair, and effective in improving the customer experience.

This section has been created to ensure your contact center quality assurance framework is following key parameters, and will equip you with everything you need by covering:

1. **The Three Key Elements of Quality Assurance should be bespoke to your business needs.**
2. **The Key Scorecard Metrics in your quality assurance process must measure.**
3. **How to produce evaluation forms that deliver.**
4. **The latest quality monitoring trends.**
5. **Quality assurance best practices.**
6. **Creating quality reports that hit the mark.**

1. The Three Key Elements of Quality Assurance

Every organization will have individual requirements to meet its individual needs, so elements included in the scorecard should be bespoke to your own customer and business needs – so you measure what's important.

These elements can be categorized into three key areas:

1. Customer.
2. Company.
3. Engagement.

Each area is then weighted differently, depending on its importance. We derive each of the elements included in our scorecards from the key areas below. Each is accompanied by some advice for choosing what is relevant to measure.

Customer –

Think about what's important to the customer. Create focus groups to find out what matters most from their perspective and find objective ways to measure that. Is it getting the right outcome? Agent courtesy? Minimizing effort? Some examples of customer criteria to include in the scorecards:

- ✓ Did the agent address the customer in the way they would like to be addressed?
- ✓ Did the agent answer all the points in order of importance to the customer?
- ✓ Did the agent show empathy by reflecting back their experience?

Company –

Are you meeting regulatory perspectives? What about wider organizational goals? Gather the senior members of the contact center team and ascertain your business needs. This will enable you to create and add criteria that support your company's objectives.

Some examples of company criteria to include in the contact center quality monitoring scorecard:

- ✓ Did the agent read the compliance statement in the script at the start of the call?
- ✓ Did the agent notify the customer of all the relevant documentation?
- ✓ Did the agent offer transaction confirmation?

Engagement –

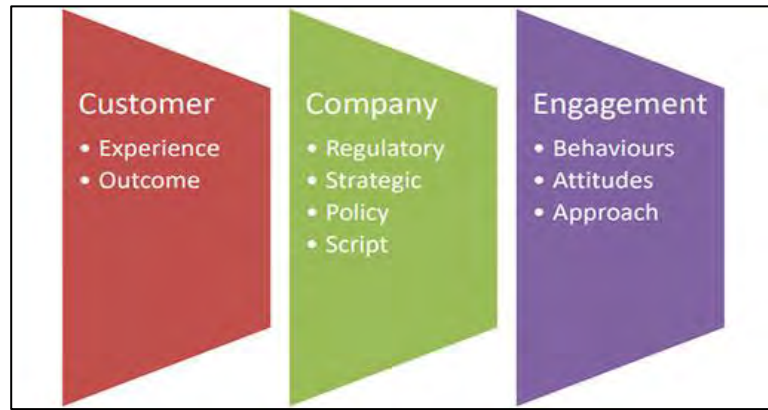
This is a more subjective area of behaviors, attitudes and the approach of the agent in helping to deliver good customer service. While the "customer" criteria dealt with what needs to be said, this take a closer look into the agent's communication style and assessing whether it was right for that customer. Some examples of engagement criteria to include in the scorecards:

- ✓ Has the agent used effective questioning skills?
- ✓ Has the agent used reflective listening to show understanding of the customer's issue?
- ✓ Has the agent taken ownership of the customer's problem?

So, these are the three key areas of QA, but they do not necessarily all have the same level of importance. That depends on the nature of your organization.

Weighting the Contact Center Quality Monitoring Scorecard

Many contact centers will give each of these three areas equal weighting, considering them to have equal value, so they will each make up for a third of the overall quality score. However, certain industries may give higher value to the “company” section of the scorecard, as compliance is a key objective. These industries will likely include sectors such as banking.



On the other hand, some industries – which may include sectors such as retail – will be more focused on meeting customer expectations and will have little in the way of regulations to consider. These industries will give higher weighting to the “customer” and “engagement” areas. But what about the individual elements within each of these three categories? Should they have the same weighting?

Remember, Not Everything Has an Equal Weight

Now that you have a batch of criteria, you are going to have to lay them out into a scorecard. But not every performance standard on your QA form should have equal weight. For example, many believe that tone of voice matters more than what the agent says in a greeting. You may also think that in a live chat, empathy will matter more than grammatical errors.

What “matters” will ultimately reflect whether your brand is customer- or business-orientated, as your CX vision performance standards, customer expectation standards and regulatory standards do not need to make up a third of the scorecard each.

These weightings should signal to agents the areas that matter most, so you are again setting the right expectations. Of course, you cannot change these weightings every day or every week, that would be very chaotic, but it is unlikely that you will get your scorecard balance right at the first try.

To assess the effectiveness of your QA scorecard, you should be looking for correlation between QA scores and other customer experience metrics and testing the scorecard with teams of analysts. This will also help to remove any scorecard subjectivity.

2. The Key Scorecard Metrics

As we’ve suggested, any number of agent metrics can be tracked using a scorecard.

The following list offers some key criteria that you may want to build into your scorecard and track individually as their own metrics.

- Greeting
- Account Verification
- Contact Information Confirmation
- Problem Solving Abilities
- Protocol Compliance
- Call Handling Skills
- Customer Service Quality
- Contact center Etiquette
- Script Compliance
- Closure
- Follow-up

You can get more inspiration and detailed suggestions for measuring customer interactions from this list of scorecard items and these scorecard templates.

Each of these measurements should play into broader themes that pertain to a contact center 's goals and objectives beyond improving the customer experience. These can include:

- Responsiveness
- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Alignment with company culture
- Problem resolution
- Follow-up service

One final note on measurement: Not every element of a quality scorecard is applicable or appropriate for every interaction, so "not applicable" may be an acceptable option in some instances. Once you have the scorecard ready to use, ensure that you are making the most of the scores and data.

3. How to produce evaluation forms that deliver

Armed with your definitive list of metrics and KPIs, the next step is to create evaluation forms that will drive your quality assurance program on the ground.

When it comes to evaluation forms (a.k.a. scorecards) the bottom line is that you get out what you put in, or to be more brutal: garbage in = garbage out. Which is why it is crucial that you identify and include the key line items that deliver the answers you are seeking.

What to measure?

Broadly speaking, you'll need to cover:

- Compliance
- Process
- Customer experience.

The secret here is to get the balance right, in line with the objectives of *your* organization.

Continuous improvement -

No matter what line items you score and how you score them, remember that one of the key roles of the evaluation form is to deliver feedback to agents that leads to continuous improvement and an increase in customer satisfaction.

Understand the bigger picture

Contact centers, contact center s, social media, email, and chatbots... Contact centers themselves are just one part of a much bigger puzzle. In today's omnichannel business environment, customers are interacting with (and about) your brand in nearly endless ways across a wide range of touchpoints. That can be a challenge to keep on top of, but the best way to overcome that challenge is with a technology solution that incorporates contact center quality assurance as just one part of the CX puzzle.

Using AI to monitor customer satisfaction and sentiment during contact center calls is great, but that active listening and processing power should also be pointed at social media platforms, third-party review sites, chatbots, and emails alike. It's only by getting a clear view of customer interactions across mediums that you'll be able to make decisive, beneficial changes to the overall customer experience.

Consultation and calibration -

Before you put your evaluation forms to work, first you need to ensure that *all* relevant parties have a say in whether they are fit for purpose. That includes your agents who are all too often overlooked, even though they are on the front line and are key to ensuring a successful outcome.

In addition, it's crucial that the people entrusted with evaluating agent performance are also in agreement as to what constitutes a good, bad or indifferent interaction. So hold regular calibration sessions and get talking about it!

Review, update and communicate.

Over time, the goals of your quality assurance program will evolve and change, so your evaluation forms must evolve along with them. By continuously monitoring and periodically updating line items to reflect the latest requirements, it will ensure the information and feedback you gather is always relevant and worthwhile. This is why you should invest in the latest Quality Assurance Software in order to gather valuable feedback direct from your customers.

And don't be afraid to move the goalposts along the way. Standards and requirements need to evolve continually in order to make sure you are always on top, and you always get the very best out of your agents.

Lastly, but by no means least, don't forget to share and explain changes along the way, to ensure everyone is in the loop and fully engaged with the program.

4. The latest quality monitoring trends -

The contact center sector is changing and evolving by the day, so it's absolutely essential that you stay up-to-date with the latest trends in order to remain competitive.

Here we examine the trends that are currently having the biggest effect on quality assurance.

Spread sheets are history -

Far too many contact centers are still relying on outdated and time-consuming Excel spreadsheets leading to inadequate reporting and delayed feedback.

Yet the technology is now freely available that will instantly catapult your quality assurance program into the 21st-century. It comes in the form of a single intuitive platform that will enable you to score customer service interactions, quickly review and suggest improvements to agent performance, and produce detailed operational reports. So tear up your spreadsheets and invest in the future with a quality monitoring platform.

The move from rigid line scoring to measuring the overall quality of the interaction.

By concentrating too heavily on overly descriptive line items and rigid measurement, your quality framework fails both agents and customers. Forward-thinking organizations recognize that checklist style approaches such as "Did you say the name 3 times" do not result in a good customer experience. As a result, they are now moving toward focusing on the overall outcome of customer satisfaction.

Flexibility is the key, and giving agents more autonomy over how they conduct themselves has been proven to result in an increase in personal motivation and overall CSAT.

Multichannel customer service requires multichannel evaluations

The shift in the way consumers access information, means that they regularly use at least four different channels. But what many contact centers are failing to address is the need to evaluate each channel and the resulting interaction differently. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' in the multichannel contact center!

Consumers are becoming more time conscious.

For consumers across the world, the two most important factors that result in satisfaction are having their issue resolved quickly and preferably on first contact. With quality assurance in mind, it underlines the continuing need to focus on improving agent skills. So concentrate more on metrics such as FCR, and reduce your contact center's fixation with AHT.

Put your head in the cloud, but keep your feet firmly on the ground.

To keep up with the increasing rate of change, you also need to adopt solutions that are integrated, scalable and modifiable. The new cloud services on offer will provide you with detailed analytics that enable almost real-time feedback, and the practical tools that your organization needs if it is to emerge as a winner in the new multichannel revolution.

5. Quality assurance best practices.

What do you have to do to create a flawless, five-star, gold-plated contact center quality assurance process? The answer is quite simple – *follow best practice*.

In this section we will detail best practice by covering the following key points:

1. Appoint a dedicated quality assurance professional.

2. Involve all stakeholders in the creation of your quality assurance program.
3. Make sure your evaluators are singing off the same song sheet.
4. Turn data into positive actionable insight.
5. Save all gold standard interactions.
6. Use surveys to complement your quality assurance program.
7. Follow the experts.

By following tried and tested quality assurance methods and procedures, you can take full advantage of the collective knowledge of the world's leading contact center professionals.

Appoint a dedicated quality assurance professional.

If quality assurance is viewed as just yet another process, it should come as no surprise if it fails to be taken seriously. With a quality assurance professional or team on board, not only will this undoubtedly improve your program, it will send a clear signal to everyone about the importance of the quality process. Involve all stakeholders in the creation of your quality assurance programme.

If you simply present your colleagues with a predetermined set of rules and procedures, don't be surprised if they view them with reluctance, not to mention a degree of suspicion. Involve them in the process of designing your quality assurance program, and it will make them ambassadors for the cause.

Make sure your evaluators are singing off the same song sheet.

Even the most meticulously selected line items are subject to individual interpretation, which can result in agents believing they aren't being treated fairly. By organizing regular calibration sessions it can iron out differences and produce more consistent scoring.

Turn data into positive actionable insight.

While a comprehensive quality assurance process delivers invaluable insight, all too often it is used solely to highlight agent errors. So instead of using evaluation sessions to highlight an agent's failings, start by praising their achievements (however small), encourage positive behaviors, and coach those areas that require improvement.

Equally, when data is collected and is in a form that can be shared across the contact center, it can serve as the foundation for a wide and varied set of improvements. You can use it to set standards for future line items, improve reporting procedures and recognize far-reaching opportunities for coaching. In short, quality management not only serves to improve the customer experience, it can help improve processes across your entire organization.

Save all gold standard interactions.

When customer interactions meet the very highest standards save them! This way you can highlight successful techniques and make a note of the words, language and interactions that resulted in a satisfied customer.

These can then be used to demonstrate best practice to new recruits, improve agent skills or simply motivate everyone to be better.

Use surveys to complement your quality assurance programme.

Capturing the true Voice of the Customer by employing surveys at the point of the customer experience is another invaluable way to improve your quality monitoring.

By capturing, interpreting and acting on feedback in real time, not only will it provide you and your agents with an immediate source of information, it is also proven to increase CSAT.

Follow the experts.

There is a wealth of expertise on the subject of quality assurance freely available for anyone looking for help and advice, simply by getting involved with the wider contact center community.

Read the blogs or following the LinkedIn or Twitter posts of customer service experts like *Shep Hyken*, or join dedicated LinkedIn groups such as *Worldwide Contact Center Professionals – Execs In The Know*.

By engaging with people and organizations outside of your organization, it will provide you with a broader picture of changing trends, and leave you perfectly positioned to incorporate the very latest ideas into your own quality assurance process.

6. Creating quality reports that hit the mark.

It's impossible to overestimate the importance of reporting. Without accurate, timely and effective reporting, all your hard work in identifying the key metrics and KPIs, creating line items and producing evaluation forms, is quite simply wasted. In addition, how can you prove the value of quality monitoring if no-one sees all your hard work? So, here's what you need to do:

Step 1: Determine who will see the reports.

In the past, only senior management were given access to quality assurance reports. Much of the reason for this, was the inability to produce reports that were understandable to anyone but the most experienced and knowledgeable members of the contact center.

In the last decade, we have seen the introduction of dedicated team members covering roles such as quality auditing, coaching and operational management. As a result, there is now a growing need to define exactly *who* needs to see the reports and *what* they want to see, for example:

- ✓ Agents want to see how they are performing over time and against a benchmark of their peers.
- ✓ Team leaders require a broader overview of the agents under their charge together with the ability to drill down to the level of an individual agent.
- ✓ Operational managers and quality specialists need to see the overall performance of the contact center across different sites, departments and teams.

Step 2: Define your reporting requirements.

For quality assurance there are broadly three main reports that you need in order to identify opportunities for improvement, trends and in support of overall performance management.

- **Operational performance reports.**

Provide you with the ability to identify where underperformance is occurring, what teams are impacting the score, and ultimately which agents are most in need of feedback and coaching.

- **Line-item reports.**

Enable you to analyze performance by individual line item, so that you can focus on very specific aspects of all customer interactions such as, how many evaluations have been completed for a particular reporting period; how many times a line item was applicable; and provide you with a breakdown of how agents performed on a specific task.

- **Evaluator performance reports.**

When operational targets have been set, this report allows you to see how you are performing within those targets across a chosen period of time.

Step 3: Present the information in the best possible light.

If your quality assurance process still requires you to produce reports using Excel spreadsheets, it's time you invested in the new technologies.

Aside from being labor intensive, the problem with spreadsheets is that they simply do not have the ability to deliver detailed operational reports that everyone can understand and act on.

Employing a web-based application will immediately elevate your quality assurance process to whole new level. When making your decision, any application worth investing in should empower you with the following features:

- It operates in the cloud (for cost-effectiveness and scalability).
- Offers a simple to use interface (a.k.a. a dashboard capable of being used by all stakeholders right across the contact center).
- Provides intelligent and secure multi-level user access (enabling you to create detailed reports at management level, and drill all the way down to the individual agent level – at the click of a button).

Three quick wins you can implement today.

Introducing a comprehensive cycle of data collection, analysis, training and improvement undoubtedly delivers exceptional quality assurance.

But if the prospect of completely overhauling your existing program is a little daunting, below are three practical tips that will show immediate results:

1. Make sure your metrics and KPIs really do help the quality assurance process. (For example, while AHT is a commonly used metric, it's actually detrimental to the quality process if agents are focusing on the length of the call rather than the satisfaction of the customer).
2. Measure the *overall* quality of every customer interaction. (Line items are only there for guidance not as a rigid box-ticking exercise. The real value lies in viewing the interaction through the eyes of the customer, if they are happy with the outcome, so should you).
3. Ensure any insight you gain is used to highlight the positive and not just the negative. (You only have to ask agents how they feel about evaluation sessions to discover how all too often they are used purely to focus on their failings. Just a little praise goes a long, long way).



Self-Check Quiz – 4.3.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What is contact center quality assurance?

Question 2: What is the Importance of Quality Assurance in the Contact Center?

Question 3: What is a contact center quality assurance framework?

Question 4: What types of quality assurance framework?

Question 5: What is the key point of Quality assurance best practices?



Answer Key – 4.3.1

Answer 1:

Quality assurance (QA) in contact centers is a process that ensures you are performing according to the standards of your company. This is done by monitoring and evaluating your team based on the key performance indicators (KPIs) that you have set. Different businesses have different goals, so you must make sure that your KPIs are aligned with your goals. It is also referred to as quality management by some companies.

Answer 2: Quality assurance is essential for:

- ✓ evaluating agent performance and training your contact center agents
- ✓ increasing operational efficiency
- ✓ collaborating internally and externally
- ✓ elevating the customer experience
- ✓ ensuring that your customer interactions are aligned with your business goals.

Answer 3:

A contact center QA framework provides critical metrics and success factors that help you measure, review, and improve customer service. Your QA framework acts as a guideline of excellence, empowering people to understand what 'great' looks like and how to achieve it.

Answer 4: There are three primary levels of quality assurance framework within contact centers. These are:

1. **Operational**
2. **Tactical**
3. **Strategic**

Answer 5:

1. Appoint a dedicated quality assurance professional.
2. Involve all stakeholders in the creation of your quality assurance program.
3. Make sure your evaluators are singing off the same song sheet.
4. Turn data into positive actionable insight.
5. Save all gold standard interactions.
6. Use surveys to complement your quality assurance program.
7. Follow the experts.



Information Sheet – 4.3.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Identify eight recommended process to calibrate quality scores.

HOW TO CALIBRATE QUALITY SCORES: Eight recommended process

Content Summary:

Call Calibration Template: Our Step-by-Step Process

STEP 1 – Assign an Overall Leader for the Quality Process

STEP 2 – Discuss Your Standards for Quality

STEP 3 – Decide on Key Behaviors to Target

STEP 4 – Ensure That Quality Targets Have a Purpose

STEP 5 – Formulate a Quality Scorecard

STEP 6 – Create a Document with Guiding Principles to Remove Subjectivity

STEP 7 – Hold Calibration Sessions

STEP 8 – Compare Scores from Different Analysts and Look for Deviations

While quality scores are often just seen as a method of measuring agent performance, they can also boost the contact center environment, by removing any perceived bias and preventing the perception of inequality.

Making the Process Fair

By refining quality monitoring, you can remove conversations about the process not being fair such as *“well ... also forgot to repeat the customer’s name and they didn’t get marked down.”*

This is because the procedure becomes standardized, so it does not matter who takes charge of the monitoring process.

Consistency across the Business

Also, calibration allows for consistent service across the business and validates contact center procedures as well as performance standards.

Call Calibration Template: Our Step-by-Step Process

Here we present an eight-step process for calibrating quality scores that combines calibration sessions with gathering data and looking for deviations.

STEP 1 – Assign an Overall Leader for the Quality Process

To successfully oversee the calibration process, it is wise to have a leader who can both have the final say on which elements of the call should be assessed and bear the responsibility and consequences of that decision.

Tom Vander Well, Executive Vice President at c_wenger_group, says: *“I think that one mistake in calibration is that there is no clear authority to make the decision.”*

“Say there are two different views on the same situation, how should we assess one particular behavior in certain situations? Is this the decision that we’re making because it fits our brand? Or is it part of our strategic plan?”

“So, there might need to be someone holding people accountable to that standard. I feel often that calibration, it just becomes an ongoing debate with no resolution.”

It seems important to have someone in charge of the process who can gather everyone’s opinions and decide with the company’s best interests in mind.

STEP 2 – Discuss Your Standards for Quality

The next step is determining whether to set a very high standard for quality, so that agents are challenged to change their behaviors and achieve a high standard of customer service, or set a simpler standard.

Setting a simpler standard – where agents achieve 100%, 90% of the time – provides agents with evidence that they are doing a good job and may boost morale.

STEP 3 – Decide on Key Behaviors to Target

Once you have determined your standards for quality, it is time to choose which behaviors to target. Tom Vander Well recommends that most contact centers should target these three in particular:

- ✓ First Contact Resolution (FCR)
- ✓ Courtesy, friendliness and soft skills
- ✓ Efficiency (lowering customer effort)

However, other contact centers, for example in financial sectors, must also target verification/compliance.

STEP 4 – Ensure That Quality Targets Have a Purpose

Now that certain behaviors have been targeted, Ian Robertson, Customer Contact Specialist at [The Forum](#), suggests asking:

- What do the behaviors mean for our customers?
- What do the behaviors mean for our colleagues?
- What do the behaviors mean for our company/organization?

By doing so, Ian Robertson says: –you can be objective and focused on the outcome, which should make it much easier to reach agreement.”

So, if everybody involved in the process can agree on why FCR, for example, is important, and why they are targeting agents on it, it is easier to come to an agreement as to what is considered FCR and the behaviors to look out for.

STEP 5 – Formulate a Quality Scorecard

Having listed the behaviors to target, it is time now to discuss the elements of each behavior on which agents can be scored.

For example, to target the soft skill of –hold etiquette”, Tom recommends the criteria:

- Does not mute or leave caller in silence instead of placing caller on hold
- Seeks caller’s permission to place him/her on hold
- Thanks, caller, for holding when returning to the line
- Apologizes for wait on hold if length exceeds 30 seconds

Whereas for the vaguer topic of call resolution, Tom recommends:

- Makes complete effort to provide resolution for caller’s question(s)
- Offers call-back if wait time will/does reach 3 minutes
- Provides time frame for call-back or follow-up correspondence
- Confirms phone number for call-back

But everybody involved in the process should discuss the elements of each behavior and together create a unique scorecard that the leader considers aligns with business goals.

STEP 6 – Create a Document with Guiding Principles to Remove Subjectivity

Despite creating a scorecard with the team, some call quality analysts may still have a different opinion of what constitutes a “complete effort to provide resolution for caller’s question(s),” for example.

In Tom Vander Well’s experience, “many calibration sessions turn into a war over a small piece of one call because of this.

“I found myself always asking: „what’s the principle we can glean from this discussion that will help us be more consistent in scoring all of our calls?”



So, Tom Vander Well advises keeping “a „Calibration Monitor” document that tries to summarize the general principles as discussed in the session, which will aid all analysts with future calls and provide guidelines to split the objective from the subjective.”

STEP 7 – Hold Calibration Sessions

Now the scorecards are primed and analysts know what is expected from them, it is time to hold calibration sessions, to ensure analysts are in tune with one another.

As Tom says, these sessions involve getting “all analysts in a room and taking one phone call. Each analyst scores the call and then everyone comes together and compares the results. This brings out the differences in the scoring, as a debate will ensue about how to align these things correctly.

“It is very healthy and positive, whilst allowing the leader to manage and say, „nope, this is the way we’re going to do it. I want everybody to look at it this way moving forward.”

It can also be a good idea to focus on a different call type during each session – whether inbound outbound, sales, etc. – to remove any unnecessary confusion.

This step is where many contact centers complete their calibration process, yet there is a significant downside to doing so. This is because, as Tom Vander Well has experienced, certain individuals will do two things.

“One, they’ll say one thing in the calibration session because they know that’s what the leader wants to hear, but then when they go back and analyse the calls, they continue to score it the way they believe it should be done.

“The second thing that I see happen is that analysts will score the call that they know is going to be calibrated one way because they know they’re going into a calibration session.

“So, the analyst may think „I’m going to score it this way because I know that’s what’s going to be acceptable in the calibration session”. But they may continue to score actual calls, which they don’t think they’ll necessarily be held accountable for, in another way.”

So, don’t ignore step eight...

STEP 8 – Compare Scores from Different Analysts and Look for Deviations

After 50+ calls have been scored by each analyst, it’s time to record the scorecards for each contact analyzed in a program such as Microsoft Excel to find a percentage likelihood of the analyst ticking a certain box.

Calibration variance for example:

Likelihood of Analyst Ticking Box (%) = Number of times an analyst ticked the box ÷ Number of Contacts analyzed x 100

$$\text{Likelihood of Analyst Ticking Box (\%)} = \frac{\text{No. of Times an Analyst Ticked the Box}}{\text{No. of Contacts Analysed}} \times 100$$

Then, compare the percentage of one analyst against the team, for each element, and look for deviations. In the example below, provided by *c wenger group*, they are looking for deviations of plus or minus 10%.

		Select Analyst > Select Time Range >	Analyst 1					Team		
			YTD					YTD		
			N = 67					N = 839		
			Yes	No	No Dev	App	App Dev	Yes	No	App
Greeting (Outbound)	Initial Contact	Use "hello" or similar salutation	0.0%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
		Identify self	0.0%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
		Identify IBC	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
		Use "please" when requesting person	0.0%	0.0%	-0.8%	0.0%	-0.5%	0.1%	0.4%	0.5%
	Primary Contact	Use "hello" or similar salutation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%
		Identify self	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%
		Identify IBC	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.8%	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%
		Use customer name	0.0%	0.0%	-0.2%	0.0%	-1.0%	0.7%	0.2%	1.0%
Greeting (Inbound)	Use "hello" or similar salutation	97.0%	0.0%	-0.4%	97.0%	-1.1%	97.7%	0.4%	98.1%	
	Identify self	98.5%	0.0%	0.0%	98.5%	-0.1%	98.6%	0.0%	98.6%	
	Identify Department	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	-1.3%	98.7%	0.0%	98.7%	
	Use "May I help you?" or similar inviting question	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1.2%	98.0%	0.0%	98.8%	
(State) or Define Request	OB	Clearly & concisely states reason for call on outbound calls*	0.0%	0.0%	-6.2%	0.0%	-5.2%	1.0%	0.2%	1.2%
		Asks additional questions, if needed, to understand issue*	17.9%	1.5%	0.7%	19.4%	5.3%	12.0%	0.8%	13.5%
	AB	Clearly restates request so caller knows it is understood*	10.4%	0.0%	0.4%	10.4%	-1.5%	11.6%	0.4%	11.9%
		Understands issues before answering	97.0%	1.3%	0.1%	98.5%	-0.7%	97.7%	1.4%	99.2%
		Avoid "dead air" [7 sec unexplained - 15 sec explained]	79.1%	4.3%	2.2%	81.6%	10.2%	91.5%	2.3%	93.8%
Verify	Verified appropriate customer tokens	19.4%	43.3%	17.0%	62.7%	-3.2%	11.3%	60.5%	71.9%	
Question	Correctly answers questions	98.5%	1.5%	0.3%	100.0%	1.8%	98.7%	1.4%	98.1%	
	Completely and concisely answer primary question	98.5%	1.5%	-0.9%	100.0%	2.0%	98.6%	2.4%	98.0%	

From this graphic, the analyst –Analyst 1” can be seen to be 10.2% less likely than the rest of the team to note that an agent tried to –Avoid dead air”.

So, taking this information into consideration, the team leader can take –Analyst 1” aside and ask them to be slightly more lenient when judging whether dead-air time exceeds seven seconds (unexplained) or 15 seconds (explained).



Information Sheet – 4.3.3

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Identify key point for improving contact center process.

BALANCED SCORECARD: To track performance

Content Summary:
What Is a Balanced Scorecard?
The four –perspectives” of Balanced Scorecard
PEOPLE
CUSTOMERS
FINANCIAL
PROCESS
Align the Scorecard with Contact Center Strategy into the following four perspectives
Demand by Channel
Resource Availability
Performance Outcomes
Quality Outcomes
Factors to choosing Metrics or KPIs for the Balanced Scorecard
Begin With Only a Handful of Metrics
How to Present a Balanced Scorecard
Beware of –Watermelon Metrics”

Many contact centers use balanced scorecards to track performance. Using balanced scorecards is now a widely accepted method of describing your business from an organizational performance standpoint. It includes all of those elements of the business that are not easily defined or quantifiable in straightforward terms of cost and function alone.

Background

The first balanced scorecards (first generation) were created at the Harvard Business School back in the early 1990s under Dr Kaplan and Dr Norton, but much of the foundation work had been done by many senior business consultants back in the 1980s.

Since then the methodology employed has evolved to take into account further organizational developments that have taken place. We now deploy what is commonly referred to as ‘fourth generational’ methodology in order to reflect these modern business concepts.

Using more traditional models, measurements were taken where they could easily be made and monitored, for example, financial cost, margin and profit, using straightforward accounting means. But this did not fully reflect the corporate strategy or their detailed organizational structures.

It is now common within many commercial organizations that business elements do not necessarily have a direct cost unit function, or an easily identifiable means of recording cost-related information.

And in many companies there is not a primary ‘profit & loss’ agenda, per se, they may have other priorities set within their strategic road map. A good example of this may exist within the emergency services where a budget is assigned and the organizational strategy will be to optimize resources for maximum efficiency.

What Is a Balanced Scorecard?

A balanced scorecard breaks down an organization’s strategy into four –perspectives”. Typically, these are: people, customers, financial and process.

The organization would then set objectives and targets against each of the four sections, to bring their strategy to life.

PEOPLE
CUSTOMERS
FINANCIAL
PROCESS

Different departments within the business – including the contact center – then set metrics and benchmarks for how they will measure their performance, in respect to these organizational objectives.

In doing so, the contact center will break its metrics and benchmarks down across the four perspectives, to keep a close eye on the “bigger picture”.

The Benefits of a Balanced Scorecard

The key benefit of a balanced scorecard is that each department considers performance in terms of the wider organizational strategy. Targets can then be clearly defined, while the contact center can then focus on aligning their data sources to automate the subsequent reporting process.

Align the Scorecard with Corporate Strategy

By doing aligning the scorecard with corporate strategy, the contact center ensures that information is managed in an accurate, consistent and timely manner. Also, contact centers can clearly refocus their strategy on incremental performance improvements, which can be later be refined.

Finally, with a good, consistent scorecard, contact centers can easily spot when things are not performing as they usually do. This is particularly true if the scorecard incorporates data visualization techniques, such as a traffic light system.

Where Should I Start?

If the balanced scorecard is an organization-wide initiative, most of the legwork is already done. The contact center can simply skip ahead to choosing the right metrics.

However, when an organization does not break its strategy down into the four categories, the contact center may want to create a unique scorecard that considers more general objectives.

The upside to this is that contact centers don't have to stick to the four traditional perspectives of the balanced scorecard. They can choose their own approach.

For example, Martin Jukes – Managing Director of Mpathy Plus – often encourages contact centers to divide their scorecards into the following four perspectives:

- Demand by Channel
- Resource Availability
- Performance Outcomes
- Quality Outcomes

Yet, Martin recommends: *“First consider: what is it that you're trying to achieve? Then, use the balanced scorecard to weigh up your priorities. This will then become a tool that enables the management team to improve performance accordingly.”*

For many contact center leaders, the format that Martin presents will align much better with their way of working. Just make sure that executives understand the purpose and importance of each category, as well as how they relate to wider business objectives.

Choosing Metrics or KPIs for the Balanced Scorecard

However, with the balanced scorecard, companies can concentrate on the “big picture”, while increasing their knowledge of how different metrics influence one another. The original idea, in fact, was to include a similar number of KPIs across the four sections of the scorecard. This meant that management would pay equal attention to each subset of metrics. How well such an approach works in practice is up for debate. But one thing is certain, across each category, there is a large number of metrics to choose from. These include:

Our People	Our Customers	Our Finances	Our Processes
Agent Satisfaction	First Call Resolution	Cost per Contact	Downtime
Employee NPS	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Acquisition	Issue Logs
Attrition Rates	Net Promoter Score	Customer Retention	Escalation Times
Absences Rates	Customer Effort Score	Operating Expenses	Call Abandon Rates
Hours Spent on Training	Average Speed of Answer	Revenue per Successful Call	Average Handling Time
Talent Progression	Complaint Volumes	Overhead Costs	Service Level

The key, however, is to select metrics that provide actionable results. Don't just measure a metric because everyone else does, otherwise reporting simply becomes an exercise in wasting time.

Instead, use that time to understand every scorecard KPI in terms of its impact on the customer, employees and the wider business, as well as what it means when the metric increases/decreases in value.

If a contact center manages to do so and feeds metric results through in real time, managers can be alert to potential problems and take action to solve them. This is excellent intraday management.

Over time, contact centers will learn corrective actions to better manage performance. Ideally, these will be written down as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This enables more proactive contact center management.

VI. Begin With Only a Handful of Metrics

A big part of managing metrics is not getting drowned in lots of information. First and foremost, stay focused on the key priorities. So, when choosing KPIs for a balanced scorecard, start small and build from there.

“I've seen balanced scorecards start quite small and gradually, over a period of time, they grow and grow, with lots of extra details in them,” says Martin.

“Because they can grow like this, keep things simple – but informative – to begin with. The best reports are often just one page, which visualizes data with colours, charts and graphs.”

This last point is important because how these metrics are brought to life is the key to creating an informative, actionable scorecard...

VII. How to Present a Balanced Scorecard

The best-balanced scorecards show the viewer all of the information in one quick glance. They do so through effective data visualization techniques.

So, bring on the charts, graphs and – arguably the most effective system – a simple traffic light colour scheme. The latter is great for providing clear and immediate insight into the current status of performance.

“Create a dashboard that shows how things are changing. Indicate what the contact center was expecting and how things were different from what they were expecting,” says Martin.

For this to work, contact centers set benchmarks with respect to what constitutes healthy performance.

When a contact center hits such a benchmark, the metric on the dashboard will turn green. Amber is for when the contact center is close to it, and red means that performance is well below par.

Here's a mock-up of a balanced scorecard example to better illuminate the idea:

Example Company Customer Services			
People		Customers	
ENPS +10	Absence >1%	CSAT 87%	Complaints 2
	Training Hours 15hr	"Your service is fantastic!" Live Feedback	
Financial		Process	
Cost Per Call £3.62	Retention 97%	Downtime 0 secs	Abandon Rate 4.2%
		AHT 297 secs	Service Level 78%

Example of a Balanced Scorecard Mock-Up

The ability to create such a scorecard in real time will not only hinge on the reporting tools that you have available but the supply of data too.

Integrating different systems – especially the CRM and dialer systems – so that data is exported to one common database is the ultimate aim. Yet, for many, this is a tricky prospect.

For some organizations, it can take a day to create a weekly report, just because the data access is so poor. They will also more than likely be using Excel for formatting, which can make it a cumbersome task.

Think of the costs of doing this over a long period of time and compare this to the costs of upgrading the contact center's systems. This analysis will help build a business case, especially if executives are very much behind the use of balanced scorecards.

VIII. Beware of –Watermelon Metrics–

One of the key issues with balanced scorecards is that the KPIs can easily be tampered with. This means that contact centers, as well as other departments, can mislead executives as to their actual performance.

"I once worked with a company that set a target for average handling time (AHT)," says Nathan Dring, Principal Consultant at [PA Consulting](#).

"The nightshift leader, when everyone was gone, would use his mobile phone to ring and hang up, ring and hang up, ring and hang up and so on."

"Suddenly, there were 100 calls answered in half a second, so AHT plummeted and, by the end of the day, the average was ,in the green"."

This is a classic example of a –watermelon metric”. Everything on the outside may appear green but, once the surface is scratched, the reality appears to be red.

Is a Balanced Scorecard Really the Best Option?

With all of these drawbacks, it is only natural to think: is a balanced scorecard really worth it?

Much of the time, this is a requirement from those who sit above the contact center director but, if it is left down to the contact center, really weigh up the advantages and disadvantages.

Pro	Con
Aligns with organizational priorities	Things can become overly complex
Targets can be clearly defined	Easy to misunderstand metric relationships
The reporting process can largely be automated	People may misunderstand what metrics mean
Easy to spot irregular performance	Difficult to create the necessary flow of data

Larger contact centers that can afford to automate much of the process may opt to press ahead with a balanced scorecard, as they can create a nice, consistent process for managing their metrics.

However, for smaller contact centers, which are working from Excel and hold little easy-to-access data, simply tracking a small set of metrics might be a better strategy.

While this may lack the complexity of a balanced scorecard, these contact centers can still home in on the metrics that matter most.



Learning Outcome 4.4 - Monitor performance according to KPIs



CONTENTS:

Call Quality Monitoring: Parameters and Triggers

Contact Center Technology: Best Return on Investment (ROI)



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Factors for choosing necessary KPIs are described.
2. Matrix or KPIs for the Balanced Scorecard is selected.
3. First Contact Resolution (FCR) is calculated.
4. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated.
5. Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) is calculated.
6. Customers' feedback are reviewed.
7. Technologies for best Return on Investment (ROI) are applied.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ingredients and relevant materials
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities
- Paper and Pen



Learning Activities – 4.4

Learning Activities	Resources / Special instructions / References
4.4 - Monitor performance according to KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Sheet: 4.4.1 to 4.4.3 ▪ Self-Check Quiz: 4.4.1 to 4.4.3 ▪ Answer Key: 4.4.1 to 4.4.3



Information Sheet – 4.4.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to identify key point for improving contact center process.

Contact Center Quality Monitoring: Parameters and Triggers

Content Summary:

What is the Contact Center Quality Monitoring?

Benefits of Quality Monitoring

Customers

Agents

Supervision

Companies

What is the Contact Center performance metrics?

Factors to choosing Metrics or KPIs for the Contact Center performance?

Contact volumes (across all contact types)

Complaint volumes (spread over different complaint reasons)

Sales volumes

Customer experience metrics (e.g. customer satisfaction)

Customer survey feedback

Service level

Abandon rate

How to Calculate Contact Center performance metrics?

Activity on Contact Center Dashboard Excel Template

Here is our ultimate guide to call quality monitoring, with key definitions, information on call quality parameters and triggers, as well as much more.

For a long time, a widespread method for checking and therefore for evaluating quality has been so-called “silent monitoring”. In this case, the supervisor or trainer accompanies a telephone conversation between agent and customer as a silent third party of a conference call. This method has the advantage that the agent can continue talking to the customer without being disturbed, but for the supervisor or trainer the following problems remain unsolved.

Agents and supervisors/trainers both have to be at their workplace to allow “live” monitoring. This could cause problems, especially for businesses that run 24/7. The monitoring is limited to the current call, no information about the process of quality is provided throughout an entire week (e.g. “Monday morning syndrome”) It is not possible to analyze critical conversations because they are not available and cannot be selected respectively.

What is the Contact Center Quality Monitoring?

Contact center quality monitoring is the process of measuring and evaluating the performance of agents and the overall quality of customer interactions within a contact center. It involves monitoring and analyzing customer interactions, such as phone calls, emails, chats, and social media messages, to ensure that agents are providing a high level of service and meeting performance standards.

Contact center quality monitoring typically involves several steps, including:

Setting quality standards: Quality standards are established based on business goals and customer expectations. These standards define the desired level of performance for agents, such as average handle time, first call resolution rate, and customer satisfaction scores.

Monitoring interactions: Customer interactions are monitored in real-time or recorded for later evaluation. Monitoring may involve listening to calls, reading emails, reviewing chats, or watching social media interactions.

Evaluating performance: Agents' performance is evaluated against established quality standards. Evaluations may be conducted by supervisors or using automated software that analyzes interactions based on pre-defined criteria.

Providing feedback: Feedback is provided to agents on their performance, highlighting areas of strength and areas for improvement. This feedback can be used to identify training needs, coach agents, and improve performance.

Implementing improvements: Quality monitoring data is analyzed to identify trends and areas where improvements can be made. Contact center managers can use this data to implement changes in training, processes, and technology to improve performance and enhance the customer experience.

Overall, contact center quality monitoring is a critical component of contact center management, as it helps ensure that agents are providing a high level of service and meeting performance standards. By monitoring interactions, evaluating performance, providing feedback, and implementing improvements, contact centers can continuously improve the quality of customer interactions, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Benefits of Quality Monitoring

Customers

- Improved customer service
- Personalized relationships
- Reduced hold times and transfers

Agents

- Effective training and coaching
- Improved job skills
- Increased motivation

Supervision

- Effective management
- Sensitivity to service quality
- Transparent communications

Companies

- Increased loyalty
- Reduced employee turnover
- Improved productivity
- Continuous improvement process
- Reduced training costs

What is the Contact Center performance metrics?

Contact center performance metrics are measurements that are used to evaluate the effectiveness of a contact center in achieving its goals and objectives. There are several key performance metrics that are commonly used in contact centers.

By tracking the 12 right metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), you can ascertain how your contact center is performing overall, including:

Performance Tracking Metrics			
1	First Contact Resolution (FCR)	7	Peak Hour Traffic
2	First Response Time (FRT)	8	Call Arrival Rate
3	Average After-Call Work Time (ACWT)	9	Cost Per Call (CPC)
4	Average Handling Time (AHT)	10	Average call transfer rate
5	Abandonment Rate	11	Forecast accuracy
6	Service Level	12	Quality Score

These metrics are used to monitor and evaluate the performance of contact center operations and identify areas where improvements can be made. By tracking these metrics and setting performance targets, contact centers can improve customer service, reduce costs, and enhance overall performance.

Factors to choosing Metrics or KPIs for the Contact Centre Performance.

By tracking the right metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), you can ascertain how your contact center is performing overall. As there are a multitude of possible metrics, it can be difficult to know which ones to focus on. Tracking them all is an impractical and impossible task -so you need to be strategic and choose your metrics wisely. Fortunately, we've compiled a list of most important performance the metrics for contact centers to help you get started.

Based on Visual Display in Scorecard: What's Included?

We have included the key KPIs that you may want to include on your contact center dashboard and have incorporated them into our invaluable template. We present the information with engaging visual displays to bring each of the following types of metrics to life:

- **Contact volumes (across all contact types)**
- **Complaint volumes (spread over different complaint reasons)**
- **Sales volumes**
- **Customer experience metrics (e.g. customer satisfaction)**
- **Customer survey feedback**
- **Service level**
- **Abandon rate**

Being easy-to-edit, you can even customize the template and choose which metrics you want to display.

Based on Business Strategy: What's Included?

Choosing the right metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) for a contact center's performance can be challenging. Here are some factors to consider when selecting metrics or KPIs:

Alignment with business goals: Metrics or KPIs should be aligned with the overall goals of the business, such as improving customer satisfaction, reducing costs, or increasing revenue.

Relevance to contact center operations: Metrics or KPIs should be relevant to the contact center's operations and performance. For example, call volumes and handling times are essential metrics for measuring contact center efficiency.

Ability to measure accurately: Metrics or KPIs should be measurable accurately and consistently. Managers should consider whether the necessary data is available, whether the measurement process is standardized and repeatable, and whether the results can be reported in a timely manner.

Actionable: Metrics or KPIs should be actionable, meaning they should provide insights into areas where improvements can be made. For example, if customer satisfaction scores are consistently low, managers can take steps to improve agent training, reduce wait times, or implement new technology to improve the customer experience.

Understandable: Metrics or KPIs should be easily understood by all stakeholders, including agents, managers, and executives. This will help ensure that everyone is aligned around the same goals and can work together to achieve them.

Balanced: Finally, managers should consider a balanced set of metrics or KPIs that provide a comprehensive view of the contact center's performance. This may include metrics related to efficiency, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction.

Overall, selecting the right metrics or KPIs is critical to measuring and improving contact center performance. By considering these factors, managers can choose metrics that are aligned with business goals, relevant to contact center operations, and actionable, helping to improve efficiency, productivity, and customer satisfaction.

How to Calculate Contact Center performance metrics?

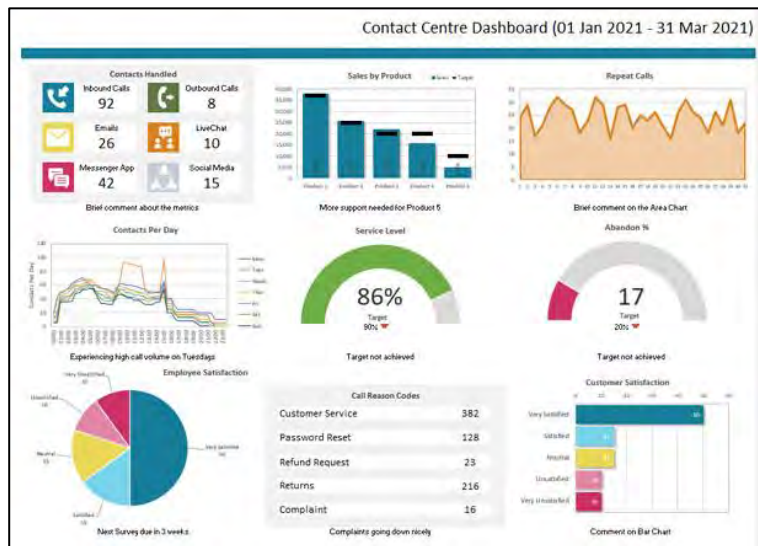
1	Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	CSAT, or customer satisfaction score, is a commonly used metric that indicates how satisfied customers are with a company's products or services. Details Calculation of CSAT on Job Sheet # 1 How to calculate CSAT under <u>the Job Sheet Section</u> , End of this Module.
2	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a customer loyalty and satisfaction measurement taken from asking customers how likely they are to recommend your product or service. Details Calculation of NPS on Job Sheet #2 How to calculate NPS , <u>under the Job Sheet Section</u> , End of this Module.
3	First Contact Resolution (FCR)	First contact resolution (FCR) measures the percentage of calls that are resolved on the first contact, without the need for follow-up or escalation. Details Calculation on Job Sheet #9 How to calculate First Contact Resolution (FCR) under Job Sheet Section, End of this Module.
4	First Response Time (FRT)	First Response Time (FRT) indicates how long your customers have to wait before getting a response to their inquiry. Details Calculation on Job Sheet #10 How to calculate First Response Time (FRT) under Job Sheet Section, End of this Module.
5	Average After-Call Work Time (ACWT)	After-call work is the activity of an agent regarding the call that encompasses filling data in a CRM system, customer card, or database. Details Calculation on Job Sheet #14 How to calculate After-call work time (ACWT) under the <u>Job Sheet Section</u> , End of this Module.
6	Average Handling Time (AHT)	Average handle time (AHT) is the average call duration that it takes to completely resolve a customer service issue or transaction from beginning to end. Details Calculation on Job Sheet #12 How to calculate Average handle time (AHT) under the <u>Job Sheet Section</u> , End of this Module.
7	Abandonment Rate	The call abandonment rate metric will tell you the percentage of customers who were waiting on hold for so long that they simply gave up and disconnected. Details Calculation on Job Sheet #15 How to calculate abandonment rate (AR) under the Job Sheet Section, End of this Module.
8	Service Level	A measurable number of services provided to a customer within a given time period. Details Calculation on Job Sheet #19 How to calculate Service Level , under the Job Sheet Section, End of this Module.

Contact Center Dashboard Excel Template

Our dashboard is an easy-to-use contact center key performance indicator (KPI) balanced scorecard, which you can use to track metric results.

By simply entering a whole range of KPIs into our dashboard template, our visual display will enable you to monitor and optimize performance.

At a quick glance, our data visualization tools will simplify KPI analysis, helping you to capture insights within seconds, not hours.



Also, the free, user-friendly customer service metrics dashboard can cover a great range important KPIs within one visually stimulating format.

Stay in Tune with Your Performance

As a manager, you understand the importance of staying in tune with your contact center's performance. Our dashboard balanced scorecard allows you to keep tabs on your KPIs, helping you to spot historical trends across a whole host of metrics.

Using these quick insights, you can drive positive change.

Over time, you will also start to get to grips with how your contact center KPIs influence one another, enabling you to make further improvements to your customer service strategy.



Information Sheet – 4.4.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to Identify Which Technologies Give the Best Return on Investment (ROI)?

Contact Center Technology: Best Return on Investment (ROI)

Content Summary:

Contact Center Technology Trends – Survey Results

What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Center?

Key Considerations for Contact Center Technology

Technologies Give the Best Return on Investment (ROI)?

- 1 Workforce Management System.
- 2 Quality Analysis (QA) Solution.
- 3 Unified Advisor Desktop Software.
- 4 Intraday Management Solution.
- 5 Cloud-Based Multichannel Solution.
- 6 Interaction Analytics.
- 7 Mobile Screening for Outbound Campaigns.
- 8 Outbound Dialer & Outbound Contact Management.
- 9 Robotic Process Automation (RPA).

Before we begin, it's worth defining what we mean when we talk about contact center technology. Put simply, the term contact center technology refers to the systems contact centers use to support business processes, enhance operational efficiencies, and deliver the customer experience.

Contact Center Technology Trends – Survey Results

Surveyed by Contact center Helper (CCH) run in partnership with NICE, this survey focuses on critical contact center areas such as technology, metrics, planning and customer feedback, throughout July and August 2022, to uncover the latest and exciting contact center technological insights from their annual survey.

2022 has seen the world attempt to return to the new normal and continue to adapt to the ongoing impact of the past two years.

Contact centers across the industry are continuing to develop their working models in the era of the 'Great Resignation', as well as managing new people, processes, and technology challenges. Looking to improve customer service, employee experience and business results, contact center leaders have continued to rise to the test.

With this in mind, survey wanted to find out what contact centers are doing right now.

With 294 contact center professionals taking part, all are delighted to share the results with you.

Survey has collected and compared their answers to previous years, as well as introduced a few new, on-trend questions, to enable them to highlight what contact centers across the globe are focusing on.

What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Center?

Steps Being Taken to Improve Call Queues

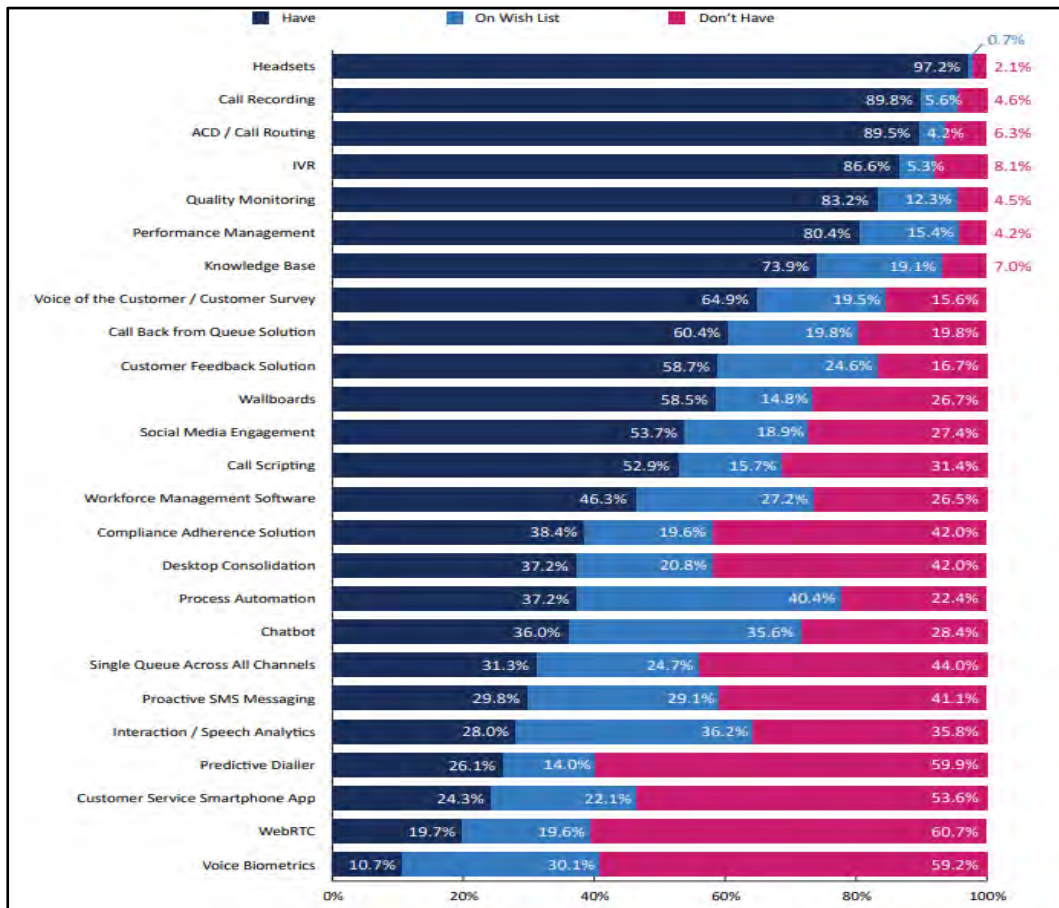
The results appear to show a slight trend amongst contact centers to improve and reduce call queues, as well as provide more avenues for customers to find answers to common queries.



The results show that contact centers having a single queue across all channels increased by 1.6% to 31.3%. [See Fig-1]

These results could suggest that the contact centers are testing the viability of single queues, and multi skilled agents, in an attempt to make a positive impact on call wait times and customer experience.

What Technology Do You Have in Your Contact Center? [Fig-1]



The most significant increase is seen in solutions that allow a call-back from the queue, which has jumped by 26.9% from 47.6% in 2021 to 60.4%, its highest point in six years, and 19.8% of contact centers see this as something they want for the future.

Last year social media engagement fell by 4.7% to 50.7% as contact centers prioritized other critical channels. This year it rose by 5.9% to 53.7%, slightly higher than the 2020 levels of 53.2%, but still 6.4% lower than 2019's 57.4%.

The rise of social media engagement supports the theory that contact centers were prioritizing other methods of customer interaction over the last two years but have now started to build their social media operating model once again.

The Continued Rise of Self-Service

The last few years have highlighted the need for contact centers to allow customers to self-serve where possible. By reducing the volume of customer contacts for simple enquiries by directing customers to self-service options, contact centers can free up agents to handle more complex queries. This allows them to simultaneously improve customer experience by giving customers what they want, when they want it. Contact centers using interactive voice responses (IVRs) has risen from 81.5% in 2021 to 86.6%, the highest point in the last seven years. Continuing this trend, the use of chatbots has increased by 5% to 36.0%, and they remain a popular technology on the wish list of contact centers, with 35.6% of respondents saying this is something they would like. Similarly, the use of knowledge bases has also seen a 10.4% increase from their 2021 levels of 66.2%. With 73.9% of contact centers now having knowledge base technology in place, they have the capabilities to give both customers and agents access to answers at the press of a button, and the ability to reduce contact volumes and average handling time and improve CX.

Customer Analytics on the Rise

64.9% of contact centers have now invested in Voice of the Customer (VoC) software, increasing by 1.24% from 64.1% in 2021. This growth may not be much, but it continues the annual increase we have seen since 2018. Collecting customer data is a growing trend across the contact center industry as the use of interaction and speech analytics has risen by 16.7% to 28.0% in the last year. Since 2017 this is a 108.9% increase in the number of contact centers using this technology, and we expect it to remain a popular choice amongst contact centers.

Contact Centers Look to Employees

Technology that supports and manages employees has seen a rise this year, with those using call scripting rising 10% to 52.9%, and the use of predictive dialers now standing at 26.1% jumping 33.2% from 19.6% last year. This rise in the use of predictive dialers follows the pattern of growth we saw between 2017 and 2019, suggesting the drop in the last two years was probably a result of the pandemic. Additionally, 46.3% of contact centers are using workforce management software, with a further 27.2% wanting it for the future. This 3.3% increase from last year could reflect contact centers looking to make it easy to manage their staff regardless of their location. In addition, the use of desktop consolidation has risen 2.5% to 37.2%, and although the number of contact centers using process automation has dropped 3.4% to 37.2%, over 40% of respondents stated it was on their technology wish list. As people management becomes more complex, it makes sense that contact centers have implemented solutions that improve agent productivity and employee experience and are looking at ones that will develop this further in the future.

Customer Engagement Platforms

A customer engagement platform is crucial for any team communicating day-in, day-out with customers, or organizations that need to speak to specific groups of people to achieve an outcome – whether to close a sale or to ask a customer to pay a bill. A good customer engagement platform makes everything easier for the individuals in customer-facing roles, helping two-way communication happen across channels on which customers want to engage, all in one platform.

This, combined with the ability to create and execute contact strategies to target the right contacts at the right time and in the right way, make more effective use of your team's time. However, not all platforms are created equal; it can be a minefield navigating the plethora of different software providers and weighing up what's suitable for your business and use case.

All-In-One Packages

The key contact center technologies today are all-in-one packages designed to enhance the agent and customer experience by offering integrated workforce management (WFM), analytics, data management, quality management and performance coaching. Just as consumers expect round-the-clock service combined with the human touch, contact center leaders demand a lot more from their technology with all the tools their frontline staff need to deliver a fast but empathetic customer experience in one place.

Tools driven by artificial intelligence (AI) are now a must have in the complex world of remote or hybrid work and increased customer expectations. Agent empowerment technologies have really come into their

own. Behind the scenes, desktop analytics quickly identify when clunky IT systems or processes are slowing agents down while sentiment analysis and stress predictors nip employee motivation issues in the bud. AI-powered chatbots facilitate a healthy work/life balance by automating requests and approvals for shift changes and time-off.

AI Tools

Agents have had a challenging time of it, as they have navigated higher call volumes over the past two years. Yet help is coming, as companies use artificial intelligence (AI) to transform the contact center experience. AI can serve up insights across multiple applications and knowledge bases, power chatbots, enhance digital workspaces, provide coaching during calls, and more.

It's estimated that efficiency features such as AI-based ticket classification and automatic routing of incoming customer contacts to the right agent can save agents up to 1.2 hours a day. As your company plans its AI investments this year, consider focusing them on technologies that improve the agent and customer experience. For example, automated testing of customer journeys can eliminate problems before they're ever deployed, reducing agent headaches.

It also can improve self-service tools such as chatbots and interactive voice response (IVR). Customers get to try self-service before calling contact centers, and agents get to focus on higher-priority calls.

Key Considerations for Contact Center Technology

There is a wide range of technologies supported on a wide range of platforms (CCaaS, CRM, UCaaS), the best of which are designed to be open. Organizations can customize their systems with the functionalities most needed by their customers and agents. This is amazing news for customer experience, especially when the integration is achieved via a single interface so information and workflow is unified without switching.

What to consider when choosing contact center technology:

Open Architecture

In a sense, technology with open architecture is a key technology as it allows customization to industry sectors as well as specific customer bases.

Omnichannel

Omnichannel technology that facilitates channel-less interactions takes individual touchpoints and weaves them into a unified customer journey so the frustration of repetition is minimized.

Conversational AI

Advanced conversational AI helps to move past a stage where interacting with AI requires a level of customer concentration and their best phone voice.

By utilizing natural language processing (NLP), natural language understanding (a subset of NLP) and sentiment analysis, more accurate and nuanced interpretation of customer speech and text is possible.

Machine Learning

Machine learning is crucial to continued improvements in AI systems. It is not really a standalone technology but is integral to progress and development post-deployment. This capability means ROI will increase over time, provided the process is supervised and reviewed for accuracy.

Automation

Automation on both sides of the CX equation offers multiple benefits. Customers benefit from easy-to-use automation and can bypass call queues.

Businesses benefit from lower-cost services. Agents benefit from automated working processes to help make sure no important regulatory steps are skipped in an interaction. For simple logical repetitive workflows, this is both accurate and efficient.

Voice Technology

Voice technology is perhaps one of the most important but overlooked. With many simpler interactions going through automation and self-service, it is to be expected and accepted that Average Handling Time (AHT) will increase.

So, embedding advanced technology into the contact process is the only way to mitigate this to some extent. As there is a lot of current focus on human connection, simply trying to force agents to deal with customers more efficiently will not convey the right message to anyone.

Qualification, routing, and agent assist functions utilizing conversational AI, automation and transcription capabilities maximize the efficiency of what is still the most popular customer service channel.

Technologies Give the Best Return on Investment (ROI)?

Technology: A Workforce Management (WFM) System

Brief Overview

Contact center workforce management (WFM) software enables companies to manage their contact center employees' schedules, activities, and performance. In businesses where contact center responsiveness to incoming calls is critical, contact center workforce software helps businesses run the line of business efficiently. Contact center workforce software is used by managers of customer service call and contact centers to effectively monitor the quality of calls and manage agents' time and learning. They can also be used by the agents themselves to self-schedule, submit time-off requests, receive feedback, and access training materials. Tools in this category are often used in conjunction with contact center infrastructure products, and can supplement other customer service-related tools like help desk and live chat products.

To qualify for inclusion in the Contact Center Workforce category, a product must:

- Forecast customer call demand
- Predict agent staffing numbers based on historical trends
- Allow for the creation and editing of agent work schedules
- Provide visibility into agents' call volumes and performance
- Provide analytics dashboards and call recording to give managers insight into performance and quality

How It Can Provide a ROI

Workforce management can provide a return on investment through improved schedule optimization, improved adherence to schedules and a significant reduction in administration.

Contact centers sometimes employ hundreds or thousands of people, making it difficult for managers to plan and assign shifts. Furthermore, many contact center employees work part-time and have limited availability; resources like workstations are limited, and contact centers need to find the best way to satisfy demand despite the constraints mentioned above.

Planning and scheduling —

Contact centers need to constantly adapt to the changing needs of their customers through flexible planning and by scheduling resources based on their availability.

Improve customer satisfaction —

Customers expect the best quality at reasonable costs, which can only be achieved when agents are properly trained and engaged and idle times are reduced as much as possible.

Support employees —

Agents are the most important asset of a contact center, which is why companies need to ensure that they are engaged at work, which makes them more productive and loyal

Furthermore, a WFM system that can schedule to agent preferences can result in improved employee engagement that lowers attrition and absenteeism.

Contact Center Workforce Software Features

This type of software includes standard workforce management features such as workforce planning and functionality specific to contact centers, such as intraday management. Contact center workforce software products cover the functions mentioned below, and advanced features are available through integration with other solutions.

Agent availability —

Many contact center agents work part-time, which means that they are only available a few days per week. Also, since contact centers may have customers in multiple time zones, they need agents available in the evening and on the weekends. Finally, contact centers may have multiple locations in different countries and may allocate resources from multiple teams to the same project. It is therefore critical that companies have complete visibility into the availability of all their agents.

Shift planning —

Managers and supervisors assign agents and physical resources to tasks based on their availability and the requirements of their customers. Planning should consider labor regulations related to the maximum time worked by day or week, breaks, and time off.

Workforce scheduling —

Shift planning is the starting point for workforce schedules, but unexpected changes may force supervisors to review scheduling. For instance, customers may require additional work, or agents may have to work additional hours when targets aren't achieved on time. All these changes should be reflected in the work schedules so that supervisors are able to communicate with agents to let them know when they are supposed to work and for how long.

Intraday management —

Intraday features ensure that agents adhere to the daily schedule and perform as expected. This functionality rebalances each day's workload to ensure that there are enough resources to comply with service level agreements (SLAs). Depending on their role and experience, agents are expected to perform within predefined parameters such as the minimum number of calls per hour or average time per call. Consistently low-performance levels may indicate that agents are not motivated or require additional training.

Forecasting —

Using historical data, companies create forecasts for future demand and estimate the resources required to fulfill it. Forecasting also considers potential risks that may impact the company's ability to deliver services on time and budget.

Performance analysis —

Agent performance is tracked by monitoring multiple factors such as the number of calls performed, the time spent per call, and the quality of their work. Agent performance is evaluated at regular intervals, such as monthly and quarterly. Supervisors may also listen to calls without warning and intervene when required. Supervisor performance is evaluated based on their team's work and their ability to solve unexpected issues such as workforce shortages and dealing with aggressive customers.

Service levels —

While contact centers have internal quality standards, many customers have SLAs that need to be respected. SLAs are usually a contractual obligation, and contact centers that do not comply may have to pay penalties or get sued.

Workforce optimization —

Using machine learning and artificial intelligence, companies identify agents that are more likely to underperform and assign them to less critical tasks. Intelligent technology may also estimate the likelihood of disruptions like bottlenecks, such as when there are more available agents than workstations.

What Sort of ROI Can the Contact Center Expect?

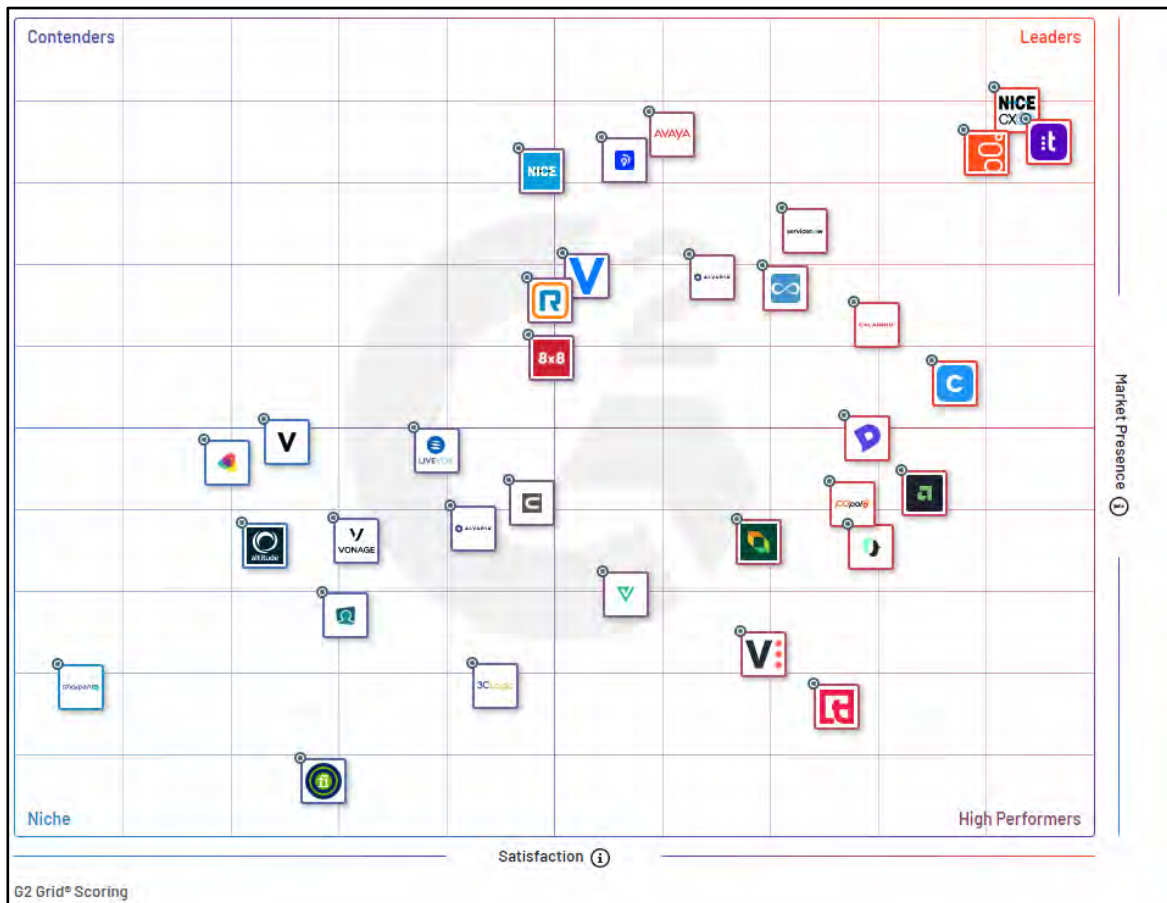
A contact center can generally expect to see a return on investment that would cover costs of a three-year agreement within the first 12 months.

This would be through a 10% saving on staff costs, as result of schedule optimization and improved adherence, a 25% reduction in attrition, a 5% reduction in sickness and a 30% reduction in administration costs.

Leading Contact Center Workforce Management Software Provider:		
NICE CXone	Five9	Altitude Xperience
Talkdesk	Verint WFM	injixo
Genesys Cloud CX	Dixa	Sharpen-CX
CloudTalk	Assembled	RingCentral
Ameyo	Playvox WFM	8x8 Contact Center

G2 Grid® for Contact Center Workforce

Check out the G2 Grid® for the top Contact Center Workforce Software products. G2 scores products and sellers based on reviews gathered from our user community, as well as data aggregated from online sources and social networks. Together, these scores are mapped on our proprietary G2 Grid®, which you can use to compare products, streamline the buying process, and quickly identify the best products based on the experiences of your peers.



For Details: <https://www.g2.com/categories/contact-center-workforce>

Technology: A Quality Analysis (QA) Solution

Brief Overview

Contact center quality assurance software is designed to help businesses evaluate the performance of their customer service operations. For contact centers and customer service teams, quality assurance (QA) is an essential process for improving customer satisfaction and employee engagement. Contact center quality assurance software is primarily used by customer service managers to assess agent performance, provide timely feedback to employees, and increase department productivity. Contact center quality assurance software can be integrated with other sales or customer service tools such as CRM software or help desk software, but many also offer the option to be used as a standalone product. Bespoke QA solutions are used to monitor the quality of the interactions between your agents and your customers. A contact center can build scorecards within this software and then score its agents, creating reports from those scorecards, so that they can identify trends and manage any problem areas.

How It Can Provide a ROI

While many companies offer contact center quality assurance solutions as a standalone product, there are a few who offer an all-in-one solution in which quality assurance is provided as an additional feature along with the product's core offering.

To qualify for inclusion in the Contact Center Quality Assurance category, a product must:

- Facilitate the creation and customization of scorecards for evaluating customer interactions
- Offer tools for delivering personalized feedback or coaching sessions to agents
- Provide analytics that give insight into team and agent performance
- Integrate with other customer service or CRM software
- Be specifically intended for use within a contact center environment

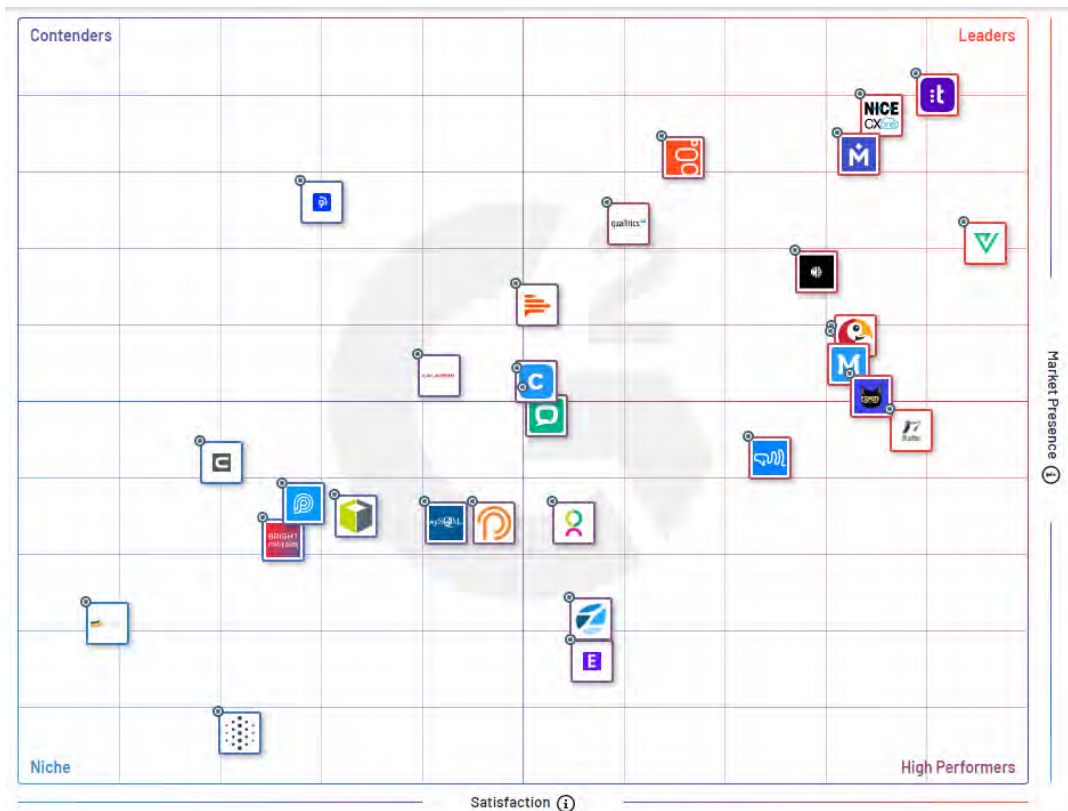
Reporting is instant, time spent monitoring calls is significantly reduced and problem areas are highlighted, so that the contact center can intervene when necessary. The follow-on from this is that agents will be more engaged (leading to reduced attrition), while Customer Satisfaction (CSat) and/or Net Promoter Score (NPS) will be improved in a controlled way.

Team leaders will generally save about 10% of their time, but a QA analyst would save anywhere up to 50% of their time. This means that, depending on the number of agents the contact center has, it can get somewhere between four times and eight times return.

Leading Contact Center Quality Assurance Software Provider:		
Talkdesk	Observe.AI	Five9
NICE CXone	Scorebuddy	CloudTalk
Playvox	Klaus	Calabrio
Medallia	Qualtrics Customer XM	Freshdesk
Genesys Cloud CX	CallMiner	Alveria

G2 Grid® for Contact Center Quality Assurance

Check out the G2 Grid® for the top Contact Center Quality Assurance Software products. G2 scores products and sellers based on reviews gathered from our user community, as well as data aggregated from online sources and social networks. Together, these scores are mapped on our proprietary G2 Grid®, which you can use to compare products, streamline the buying process, and quickly identify the best products based on the experiences of your peers.



For Details: <https://www.g2.com/categories/contact-center-qualityassurance>.

Technology: Unified Agent Desktop Software

Brief Overview

Unified agent desktop software pulls together customer data from varying sources and wide systems into a 'simple, single' agent view.

Agent desktop software is a tool used to organize, manage, and respond to service-related requests from internal and external sources. Customer inquiries are typically submitted via multiple channels, including email, phone, or social media. Customer service teams use agent desktop software tools to streamline support processes and provide analytics into customer engagement across all communication channels. These products may contain additional customer self-service and social customer service integrations or live chat software modules.

To qualify for inclusion in the Agent desktop category, a product must:

- Organize external customer inquiries into tickets for support agents
- Aggregate inquiries from emails and a customer portal
- Assign tickets to support agents for prompt service

Also, it consolidates communication channels in the same application, allowing agents to easily navigate multiple systems without having to leave one screen.

What is the Common Features of Agent desktop Software?

The following are some core features within agent desktop software that can help users:

Customer portal: Agent desktop software offers a customizable, customer-facing interface or customer portal to enter tickets and communicate with representatives.

Automation: Response automation allows for an automatic, standard response to a customer when they first inquire. Other automation features include custom ticket or task reminders to help streamline workflow.

Social media integration: Social integration allows customers and representatives to communicate with each other through social networks. Social integration helps with approachability and gives customers the opportunity to get a question answered quickly.

Ticket tagging: Managers can easily distribute tickets using ticket tags to make it easy for agents to see what tickets are assigned to them.

Live chat support: Live support allows customers to get a quick answer for their inquiry or concern. If their inquiry needs escalation or clarification, it can be routed through to customer service agents.

Templates: Templates are custom, auto-populated response templates that reduce the time taken to respond to a ticket. Templates can reflect the brand of the company and can be adjusted to reflect the specific needs of the customer.

Service level agreement (SLA) management: SLA defines the expected outcome of each customer inquiry. Managers and agents can monitor SLA times to keep track of overdue tickets.

Self-service portal: For customers that don't have time to wait for an agent's response, a self-service portal is a way for them to find answers to simple questions quickly in a designated knowledge base, such as a forum or series of articles.

Other features of agent desktop software: Ticket Collaboration, Email to Case, Attachments/Screencasts, Mobile User Support, Customer and Contact Database, Voice Capabilities.

What are the Benefits of Agent desktop Software?

Businesses of all sizes benefit from using agent desktop software to provide organized customer support. Utilizing a agent desktop platform makes day-to-day operations for agents and managers easier and more efficient for several reasons:

Ticket management: Customer support managers can easily delegate inquiries to specific agents as they see fit. The ticketing system can be automated by routing it to agents for additional efficiency. All tickets end up in one location that can be viewed by the team and in an agent-specific view. With an overall view, managers can reroute tickets if a certain agent has too large of a task load or based on agent availability. Tickets are routed to the agent who can better assist the customer's needs. Tiered ticketing allows for certain tickets to get priority above others.

Customer inquiry tracking: Keeping the customer happy is the main goal of any customer service team. Allowing customers to track the progress of their inquiry is beneficial to the happiness of a customer. Tracking helps customer service teams as well. The progress of a ticket provides transparency so management can hold representatives accountable for the timeliness of an issue or inquiry being resolved. Tracking also provides liability internally. Users have the ability to go back and look at old tickets and see how the issue was resolved.

Customer inquiry allocation: Companies without a agent desktop system often use an email inbox for customer inquiries. This process easily becomes cluttered and difficult for collaboration. Additionally, a major issue with an email solution is that team members are unaware of when a problem is being looked at by another team member. Agent desktop software helps improve all of these processes by allowing the allocation of tickets to a specific customer service agent as soon as it is submitted. Tickets can be allocated automatically or by a fellow team member. The allocation procedure is typically to send tickets to representatives that hold a specific skill set or handle a unique type of issue. Ultimately, allocation improves productivity for all team members by allowing them to focus on the customer, not the routing process. It also helps customers receive the response they need in a timely manner without the risk of their inquiry being lost in the shuffle.

Reporting: Reporting allows businesses to see things like the number of inquiries coming in, turnaround time, and resolution rate per customer support representative. These metrics provide a business perspective on how its customer support team is performing, which gives team members the ability to correct any issues and generally improve a customer's experience with the business.

Integration support: Agent desktop software can be integrated with existing information technology (IT) infrastructure, such as CRM software, social media, and more.

How It Can Provide a ROI

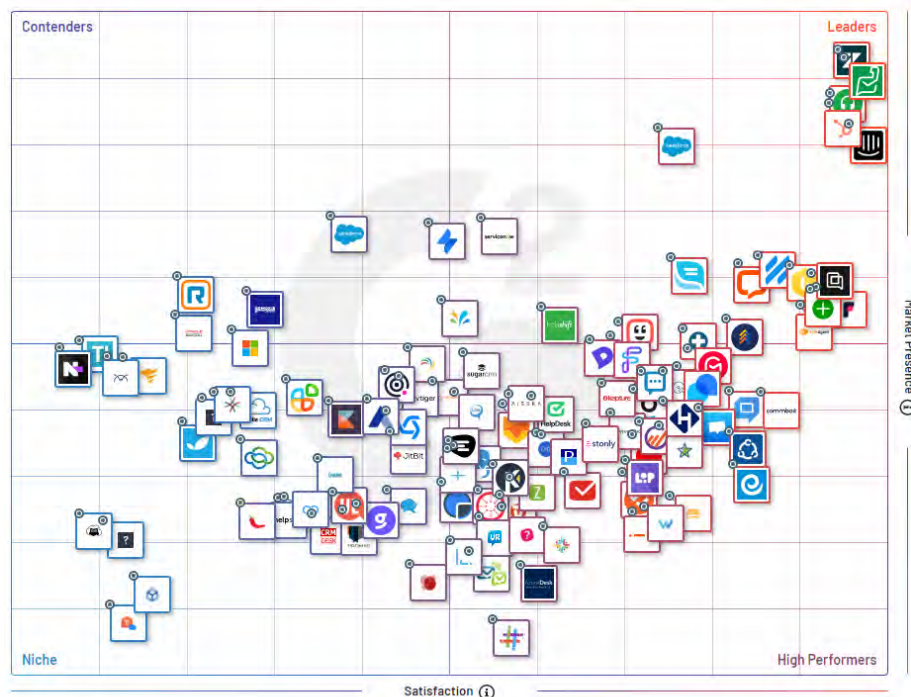
Through providing a single view of the customer and grouping activities, the unified agent desktop software reduces time spent resolving customer requests by up to 40%. This is also because agents will have a clear view of all of the correspondence that has come from each customer, therefore avoiding any repetition of workload.

This will considerably free up agents' time, so companies can reduce the workforce at the service desk and/or reallocate their resources elsewhere. So, the software provides a return on investment via a boost in productivity from service desk agents.

Based on real-life deployments, companies have reduced agent overtime by 40% following the unified agent desktop software implementation. To provide an estimation of savings as a result: for a £10,000 solution, a company could expect to save £4,000, due to the above-mentioned benefits.

G2 Grid® for Agent desktop

Check out the G2 Grid® for the top Agent desktop Software products. G2 scores products and sellers based on reviews gathered from our user community, as well as data aggregated from online sources and social networks. Together, these scores are mapped on our proprietary G2 Grid®, which you can use to compare products, streamline the buying process, and quickly identify the best products based on the experiences of your peers.



G2 Grid® Scoring

Leading Contact Center Agent Desktop Software Provider:		
ZENDesk Support Suite	Salesforce	LiveAgent
ZohoDesk	Hiver	LiveChat
FreshDesk	Front	Teamsupport
HubSpot Service Hub	Gladly	Kustomer
Intercom	Rescue	Tidio

For Details: <https://www.g2.com/categories/contact-center-agent-desktop>

Technology: Cloud-Based Multichannel Solution

Brief Overview

Contact center software, also referred to as CCaaS or contact center as a service, provides businesses with the capabilities necessary to run a **cloud-hosted** customer contact center. Founded on traditional, voice-based contact center solutions, contact center software enables inbound queueing and routing, outbound dialing, call analytics, and workforce management. However, this type of software goes beyond contact center infrastructure to support digital interactions in **multiple channels**, such as SMS, email, and chat. Common features of contact center software include automatic call distribution (ACD), interactive voice response (IVR), omnichannel support, and computer-telephony integrations (CTI).

Contact center software is commonly used by support teams to staff a help line or by sales teams to handle prospecting. These products integrate with CRM software applications to access customer information and to update customer records with the post-action summaries. They will often integrate with contact center workforce software, speech analytics software, and contact center quality assurance software solutions if the product doesn't provide that functionality natively. Contact center solutions may also integrate with or include features for unified communications, or UCaaS.

To qualify for inclusion in the Contact Center category, a product must:

- Offer a cloud-based contact center solution
- Distribute incoming calls and manage phone number assignment for outbound centers
- Provide the infrastructure for call management, placement, and monitoring
- Provide multiple channels (such as voice, SMS, email, chat) for contact center representatives to leverage
- Include the following features: automatic call distributor, interactive voice response, queue management, and computer-telephony integrations
- Supply additional features that assist contact center operations, such as speech analytics, workforce management, and quality assurance
- Integrate with CRM software or a company's system of record

These solutions are for contact centers of all sizes who are looking to increase their multichannel capabilities.

How It Can Provide a ROI

Because of the pricing model of cloud-based contact centers it is possible to get more for less, making ROI against traditional on-premise infrastructure easier to measure. There is no up-front capital expenditure or annual maintenance payments associated with on-premise equipment.

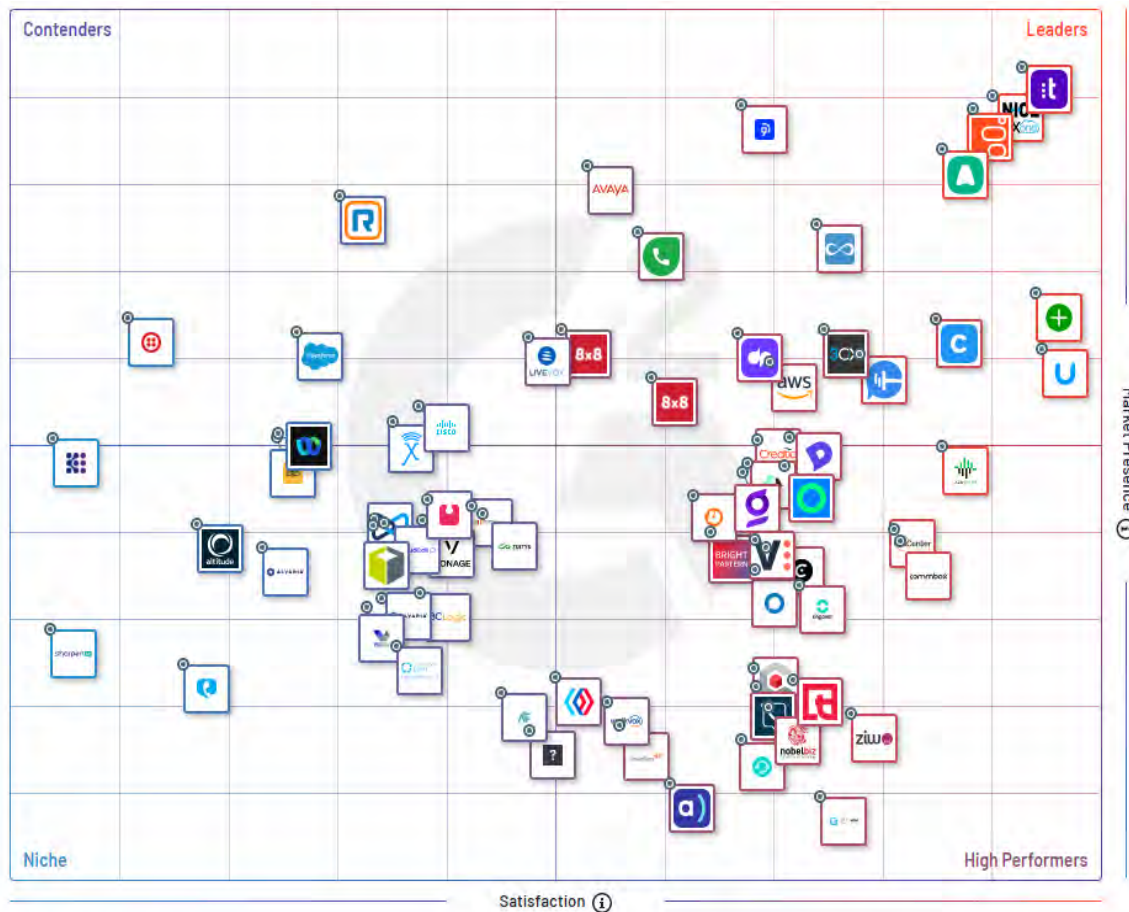
In traditional on-premise scenarios, the user must license for maximum capacity, which therefore attracts higher support and maintenance fees. Under a Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) model, actual agent usage can scale up and down as the business demands and the monthly costs reflect this.

Over a three-year period, a cloud-based pay-per-use solution for 100 voice agents may reduce costs by over 30%, when compared against a traditional on-premise system.

These savings are without taking into account the additional costs associated with on-site infrastructure such as floor space, maintenance and upgrades.

G2 Grid® for Cloud-Based Multichannel Contact Center

Check out the G2 Grid® for the top Cloud-Based Multichannel Contact Center Software products. G2 scores products and sellers based on reviews gathered from our user community, as well as data aggregated from online sources and social networks. Together, these scores are mapped on our proprietary G2 Grid®, which you can use to compare products, streamline the buying process, and quickly identify the best products based on the experiences of your peers.



G2 Grid® Scoring

Leading Contact Center Cloud Based Multichannel Software Provider:		
Talkdesk	Five9	Dialpad
NICE CXone	Ujet	Amazon Connect
Genesys Cloud CX	Ameyo	Ozonetel Cloud Agent
3cx	CloudTalk	RingCentral
Gladly	FreshDesk	8x8 Contact Center

For Details: <https://www.g2.com/categories/contact-center-saas>



Learning Outcome 4.5 - Conduct performance appraisal



CONTENTS:

360 FEEDBACKS: What It Is and Why It Works?

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: Conducting a 'forward-looking' approach



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Individual performance of team members is evaluated using KPIs.
2. 360-degree feedback is provided to team members.
3. Areas of improvement are identified and communicated to the team members.
4. Performance appraisal is communicated to HR department.



RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Students/trainees must be provided with the following resources:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ingredients and relevant materials
- Tools, equipment and physical facilities
- Paper and Pen



Learning Activities – 4.5

Learning Activities	Resources/Special instructions/References
4.5 Conduct performance appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet: 4.5.1 to 4.5.2 • Self-Check quiz: 4.5.1 to 4.5.2 • Answer key: 4.5.1 to 4.5.2



Information Sheet – 4.5.1

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to provide 360 Feedback to the agent.

360 FEEDBACK – What It Is and Why It Works?

Content Summary:

360 feedback – What It Is and Why and How It Works?

Four steps to success

360 feedback success

The Importance of Contact Center Quality Feedback

How to Give Contact Center Quality Feedback

Using Contact Center Software to Improve Quality Feedback

7 Feedback Model

- 1-The Feedback Sandwich
- 2-The 3:1 Ratio (3 Positive to 1 Negative)
- 3-Why and How
- 4-The Continue and Begin Model
- 5-The ERIC Model
- 6-Situation, Behavior, Impact
- 7-The Five-Word Performance Review

14 Key Rules for Receiving Feedback

Contact Monitoring Feedback for Training

1. Measurable
2. Memorable
3. Motivational

360 feedback– What It Is?

For those of you not familiar with the 360-feedback system, this is exactly what it does. It takes a structured multi-source approach to analyzing a person's performance on all levels of the organization.

Its primary focus is to inform training and personal development through a greater self-awareness.

Trying to find out this information by asking people directly can be awkward. Even if you get the answer you would like to hear, how do you know it's really the truth? Are people simply saying that because they don't want to offend you or do, they genuinely believe you're great at what you do?

Anonymous feedback has great value as it takes out the awkwardness for everyone involved. People giving the feedback feel free to say what they really think without fear of recrimination. And for the person receiving the feedback, the anonymity makes it less personal, which means they're more likely to receive it constructively and act on it.

When properly implemented, it's a great business tool that can help good managers become great managers and change behaviors within an organization for the better.

Aside from being anonymous, one of the main advantages of the 360-feedback system is that it is done online and independently from the organization. The structured approach ensures that the data is carefully analyzed and feedback is provided to participants in a constructive way.

How it works

The multi-source approach typically surveys on at least three levels: work superiors, colleagues and subordinates, as well as the participant themselves. Hence the name 360, because it looks at the participant's performance from all angles.

What do you do well and what could you do better?

The type of questions asked cover people engagement, performance excellence and results focus. Typically, there are about 40–50 statements and questions that cover different aspects, such as self-awareness, communication, coaching and leadership.

The statements should be aligned to the behaviors you need in your organization in order to achieve your strategy. For example, creativity and problem-solving abilities, planning and time management, customer-centricity and stakeholder management are popular areas to include. Also consider asking for views on decision making, data intelligence, risk management and how effectively the participant is able to lead their team through change.

On top of all these questions, evaluators are also asked what the person does well and what areas could use some improvement. To ensure consistency, each statement or question is evaluated using a scale of 6 optional answers and a score is assigned to each answer.

Four steps to success

While the success of the 360 feedbacks will depend on the participant's willingness to accept what others have said and make changes accordingly, the process followed is simple.

Over a period of 3–4 weeks the following four steps are implemented:

1. Evaluators are identified and invited to complete the survey
2. Participants complete the survey themselves
3. Data is analyzed and feedback is provided in a detailed report through a 90-minute one-on-one coaching session
4. Participants can make behavioral changes or undertake development training

It is vital that once there is self-awareness of what the participant is doing well and what needs improvement, they need to act immediately – whether this is trying new approaches or attending training/coaching, or consuming other resources such as books, TED talks or articles.

A greater self-awareness is only meaningful if it leads to real behavioral change because that's where the greatest opportunities for growth lie.

Typically, the 360-feedback process can be repeated every 6–18 months. When selecting a timeframe, though, ensure that it gives participants enough time to engage in development and training – so that the next 360 feedback session reflects some of the changes they have made.

360 feedback success

In a recent 360 feedback case study, an organization saw positive behavioral changes in at least 50% of participants. This in turn positively impacted those working with them either as managers, colleagues, or team members. Because people were now aware what others thought of their work performance and expected from them, it opened channels of communication within teams and resulted in a marked improvement in team performance.

What really excites me about this process is how it impacts customer service in a positive way. This simple exercise of self-awareness really changes how people see their role at work. It makes them more aware of how they interact with others on every level, from customers through to managers and directors. Mostly it really encourages self-development and helps people to see the bigger picture – how their individual actions impact the customer experience.

The Importance of Contact Center Quality Feedback

Constructive feedback is critical in a contact center and essential to its success. Through consistent and authentic communication based on performance, you can help agents improve their skills.

If you leave your agents to their own devices 95% of the time, they may think they're doing just fine. Then, if you swoop in once a year and give them a bunch of negative feedback about their actions, not only will your agents get incredibly defensive, they'll wonder why they were never told anything before.

Furthermore, people in general tend to get complacent without encouragement and motivation to improve their skills. The key is to take the drama out of giving and getting feedback. You want it to become a part of the contact center culture, so your agents come to expect it and appreciate it. That all starts and ends with you as their manager and leader.

According to a recent Gallup study, managers alone account for 70% of variance in employee engagement.

So, if you don't use your contact center manager skills to give feedback effectively, then your employees aren't going to get the ongoing development they need and want.

How to Give Contact Center Quality Feedback

Feedback is something that many people dread receiving and giving. For some reason, we believe that if we are getting feedback, or if we are in need of training, we must be doing something wrong.

However, contact center quality feedback is an essential tool to keep agents on track and to help them improve their performance and to help your business achieve its organizational goals.

Think of contact center feedback as a cruise ship. During the journey, the ship may steer slightly off course due to bad weather, but the ship's captain will always correct the course soon; otherwise, the ship is destined to sink.

6 Contact Center Quality Feedback Examples

So, what are some good examples of contact center quality feedback? It's highly dependent on your contact center's goals and needs, but there are a few things that we can recommend.

1. Use Post-Call Surveys

If you have your customers take a post-call survey about their experience, use this data to provide feedback based on the customer's perspective. You can then tie the customer's feedback into the call recording to match up their thoughts with the agent's interactions.

2. Provide Agents with Call Scoring Evaluation Forms

Self-scoring is a highly valid way to give and receive feedback on the effectiveness of a call. By allowing the agent to self-score their interaction first, using software you increase their receptiveness to additional feedback and open up the opportunity for additional review of their call in a later training and coaching session.

3. Take Advantage of Contact Center Software Reporting Dashboards

Most contact center software dashboards provide you with call data metrics such as time spent in queue, handle time, number of transfers, hold time, first time resolution and so on. This data can back up your feedback and help you demonstrate for your agent where they fall below and how that reflects on company standards.

4. Use Positive Language

Avoid negative language such as “you shouldn’t” or “don’t do” or “this was wrong...” Instead, use language that inspires new methods as it’s more encouraging and focused on continual success. For example, taking the approach of: “Maybe you could try...” or: “Have you considered doing...” are much better phrases.

5. Be Simple and Direct

Do not beat around the bush when it comes to giving feedback. Straightforward constructive criticism and praise are easier to understand and put your employees in a better headspace.

For example, you could say something like: *“Sara, can I give you some feedback on that last call? I really appreciate how you handled the customer and listened to their complaints for so long. That was very kind. However, I feel that in your effort to empathize with the customer, you may have made it more difficult to make them happy. For example...”*

6. Use a Template

If you have specific performance goals for the customer experience, use those goals as a call monitoring feedback template. For example, let’s look at the goal of emotional intelligence. As outlined, a good contact center agent must be able to anticipate customer requests, deliver explanations and justifications, educate customers, provide emotional support, and offer personal information.

Provide feedback on each point with examples to back it up in a template format, so your agents always know what to expect.

Using Contact Center Software to Improve Quality Feedback

Technology can help facilitate feedback training by using tools such as voice recording and speech analytics to gather quality data. This technology can efficiently flag calls that contain specific phrases or errors for managers to listen to and incorporate into their training.

This data is valuable in providing objective evidence when an issue is being addressed. For example: If you are working on reducing average call handling times, periods of silence on calls can be flagged as areas for improvement.

Or you can use Scorecards to flag calls where the customer was deemed to still be upset by the end of the call, and then use those calls to illustrate good and bad points. The key is to use the scorecards as hard evidence that change is required to improve.

The key to effective training is that it needs to be an active two-way discussion. Do not just focus on what they did wrong or right. Questions enable you to understand what the agent is thinking or feeling and how they might need help. Ask them for suggestions for improvement, rather than telling them.

7 Feedback Model

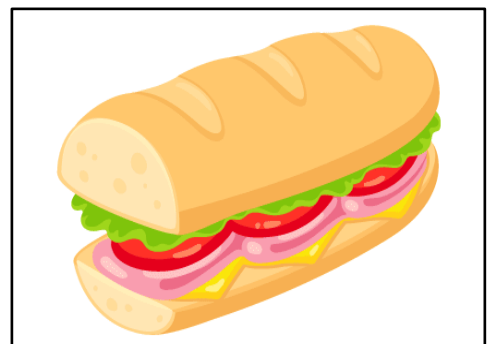
Many leaders like to use a model to better structure their employee feedback. Here are seven such examples that you can use with your employees.

5. The Feedback Sandwich

The premise of this model is to start and end on a positive note, so that you begin the conversation on a positive note and leave the employee happy at the end.

Sandwiched between these two bits of positive feedback is where you bring up key areas for improvement, so that they are easier to –digest.”

It is a simple technique that has a lot of merit. Just be careful that you do not overuse it. Otherwise, it can become predictable and the team will only start to focus on the negative.



6. The 3:1 Ratio (3 Positive to 1 Negative)

Another simple feedback model is to give three bits of good feedback to every one constructive piece of feedback. By doing so, you highlight lots of key achievements, while setting up an area for potential improvement, once the employee has settled into the conversation. Again, this can be an overly simple solution, so, if you decide to use this feedback model, do try to use it alongside a mixture of other techniques.

7. Why and How

This model is great to use when giving constructive feedback. It works by showing the employee why they need to make the change, before highlighting how they can do so. It's important that the employee feels invested in making the change early...

While simple, it's important that the employee feels invested in making the change early, so they are more interested in learning how they can then transform their performance. It is all about giving the employee a purpose and a motivation to improve. That is a key part of giving good feedback.

8. The Continue and Begin Model

This model was devised by contact center expert Nick Drake-Knight.

Like —the Feedback Sandwich”, this technique starts by helping the employee to feel good. To do this, the leader asks the employee: —What would you like to continue to do well?” This helps the employee to reflect upon their success.

Next, ask the employee: —What would you like to begin to do, in order to do an even better job of meeting performance standards?” This can lead to some really great coaching conversations.

Such a model allows agents to think about their performance gaps themselves, so you are not seen to be —prescribing” solutions. If they come up with solutions themselves, they'll buy into them better.

9. The ERIC Model

This model is not just for giving employees feedback, it can also help to gather it. **ERIC is an acronym for:**

Eliminate

Reduce

Increase

Create

Take your team through this model and first ask them: —To make your life easier, what can we eliminate/reduce/increase/create?”

Be receptive to all of their feedback and set the standard by following each rule of the 14 below for receiving feedback. Then turn the tables, so both parties can take away key pieces of feedback to improve performance.

10. Situation, Behaviour, Impact

When you have an urgent piece of feedback to give to an employee, outside of your regular one-to-one sessions, this might just be the model to use.

As the name suggests, the model works in three stages:

1. *Explaining the situation.*

2. *Highlighting the specific behavior that you would like to address.*

3. *Describing the impact this behavior has had on you, colleagues, and the wider business.*

This technique is one to use when giving good, critical, constructive feedback, as it can be really useful in helping leaders manage difficult scenarios. With this structure you can highlight just how impactful certain behaviors are, while confronting the situation in a professional manner.

11. The Five-Word Performance Review

Created by Paul English, the CEO of Kayak.com, this feedback model works by simply giving agents five words to describe their work. Not only is this simple and friendly, but it gives the feedback session a positive, friendly feel – so employees don't enter feedback conversations with an overarching sense of dread.

The employee then has five key takeaways, while the leader can then discuss each word in more detail to get their full point across.

14 Key Rules for Receiving Feedback

Working in the contact center is not all about giving feedback, you should also be actively looking for feedback to improve performance further.

When receiving feedback, you want to set an example to the rest of the team, which can really bolster the value of coaching conversations.

Sean shares a few of his golden rules for taking good feedback on board.

1. **Be Grateful – Remember, it's just as difficult to give feedback as it is to receive it.**
2. **Ask for Feedback – Let your team know that you would appreciate their feedback and advice.**
3. **Share Your Preferences – Get feedback when it's most useful by asking for it when you need it.**
4. **Don't Be Defensive – Don't argue with the feedback giver. Take the feedback under advisement and ask yourself if it's truthful.**
5. **Be Circumspect – Don't focus on the part of the feedback that makes no sense right now.**
6. **Act on It – There is nothing more frustrating than repeatedly offering the same advice.**
7. **Listen – Keep an open mind. See feedback as an opportunity to improve, rather than a personal attack.**
8. **Ask Questions – Discuss suggestions and ask for examples to help you understand what's meant.**
9. **Volunteers Your Own Suggestion – Talk about areas where you feel you could improve.**
10. **Talk About Strengths and Development Areas – The point is to find areas where you can grow.**
11. **Remove Judgment – Don't use –what" questions. Start sentences with –how".**
12. **Be Constructive and Specific – Take control and ask for examples that demonstrate what the feedback means.**
13. **Feedback Is Integral to Learning – Remind yourself of that on a regular basis.**
14. **You Don't Have to Accept Feedback – But you do owe it to yourself to think about it and evaluate it.**

Contact Monitoring Feedback for Training

Training goes together with feedback. If your feedback is only about areas they need to improve on, but you do not offer them training to make those improvements, then you are just telling them about problems. You are not helping them find a solution. The following are three essential aspects of training. Measurable

In other words, training needs to be results-focused. Create specific objectives and outcomes for each training session—not a corporate tick box. There should be a purpose that can be measured. The idea is that the agent should know exactly how to increase their performance and what steps will get them there. Another way to make training measurable is to create a contact center quality feedback evaluation with clear questions, goals, and measurements that outline a successful customer interaction.

This evaluation form should include questions based on a range of important skills, such as:

- **Agent soft skills**
 - Did the agent demonstrate adaptability by effectively responding to the customer's changing needs and wants?

- Did the agent demonstrate patience even if/when the customer became irate during the conversation?
- **The anatomy of a really good customer service call**
 - Did the agent listen carefully and understand what's important to the customer?
 - What type of language and tone did the agent use and was it appropriate?
- **Compliance and account information**
 - Did the agent verify the customer's information correctly?
 - Did the agent follow agency compliance rules for collecting data?

Memorable

Training works well when it translates into new behavior. This happens when skills are not just heard but practiced and implemented. Make training exciting and interesting, and get agents involved in the learning process to help them retain what they have learned and make them feel more motivated to implement it.

One example of this could be introducing contact center training games, which can be a great way to shake things up! One of the best things you can do is end every training session with an action plan for success. They should have specific goals and steps that they need to complete to resolve their performance problems.

Then, you should schedule a follow-up meeting for a few weeks down the road to see how they're doing.

Motivational

Trainers and the environment in which the training takes place should inspire energy and involvement. Taking agents away from the phones for training should be something they look forward to. Training that is motivational will be most effective in creating new behavior which will result in better performance.

Key Takeaways

There are many ways to give good feedback that will inspire improved performance from your team, and adopting the good feedback examples highlighted at the beginning of the article is a good place to start.

Also become familiar with models like the Feedback Sandwich, Continue and Begin, and Situation, Behavior, Impact and look to understand which techniques work best in terms of improving performance in your contact center.

Finally, look for good feedback that will help you to improve too, taking on board our golden rules for receiving feedback in a pragmatic way.



Self-Check Quiz – 4.5.1

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What is the 4 steps success of the 360 feedbacks?

Question 2: What is the 7 Feedback Model?

Question 3: What is the full form the ERIC Model?

Question 4: What is the three essential aspects of training.?



Answer Key – 4.5.1

Answer 1: 4 steps success of the 360 feedbacks:

1. Evaluators are identified and invited to complete the survey
2. Participants complete the survey themselves
3. Data is analyzed and feedback is provided in a detailed report through a 90-minute one-on-one coaching session
4. Participants can make behavioral changes or undertake development training

Answer 2: 7 Feedback Model:

- 1-The Feedback Sandwich
- 2-The 3:1 Ratio (3 Positive to 1 Negative)
- 3-Why and How
- 4-The Continue and Begin Model
- 5-The ERIC Model
- 6-Situation, Behavior, Impact
- 7-The Five-Word Performance Review

Answer 3: The **ERIC** is an acronym for:

Eliminate
Reduce
Increase
Create

Answer 4: The following are three essential aspects of training:

6. **Measurable**
7. **Memorable**
8. **Motivational**



Information Sheet – 4.5.2

Learning Objectives: At the end of the session trainee will be able to conduct performance appraisal.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: conducting a forward-looking approach

Content Summary:

What is Performance Appraisal?

What is the differ from Performance Review?

Performance Appraisal: conducting a forward-looking approach

How do I give top-notch performance appraisals?

7 Performance Appraisal Tips for Managers/Team Leaders

- 1-Prepare ahead of time
- 2-Speak carefully and ask the right questions
- 3-Listen as much as you speak
- 4-Give specific examples for both good work and areas of improvement
- 5-Track employee progress
- 6-Have next steps for after the meeting
- 7-Make performance appraisal a regular exercise

What is Performance Appraisal?

While the performance review is more about understanding strengths and weaknesses and setting goals for the next term, the performance appraisals are more focused on the actual performance of the employee in the past year.

Performance appraisal also includes the evaluation of the employees' competencies such as commitment to the company's core values, willingness to take initiatives, responsibility for tasks, skill set and training, etc.

What is the difference from Performance Review?

It goes without saying that both Performance Reviews and Performance Appraisal have their own benefits and many of these benefits are common. Here, since we are trying to understand the difference between the two, we will be focusing more on the different benefits each one has to offer.

<p>1 Performance Reviews have a holistic approach that evaluates the relationship between employees and the company and examines the ways in which employee engagement can be fostered.</p>	<p>1 Performance Appraisal is individualistic in nature and pertains to the employees and their past performance.</p>
<p>2 Performance Review is flexible as it keeps in mind the growth of the organization, compensation, and salary as a part of PMS.</p>	<p>2 Performance Appraisal is usually rigid because it is only confined to an employee's past performance.</p>
<p>3 It has all the relevant documentation about the employee and managers can access it at any time.</p>	<p>3 Everything is documented and there are feedback forms with the HR intervention.</p>

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: conducting a forward-looking approach

So, just what makes a good appraisal? Well, the focus of performance appraisals needs to shift away from evaluation and the strict appraisal of performance towards a more forward-planning approach. This should center on improving performance and developing the appraised by means of a well-prepared, honest and open discussion.

However, the best-prepared and formatted appraisal in the world won't really be effective if the person running the appraisal isn't handling it professionally and with long-term interests involved. A truly valuable appraisal is actually an agreed summary of what has been happening since the last appraisal and what both the employee and the appraiser wish to be the case by the time of the next appraisal. If it is left to review twice a year, all the opportunities to support and guide the employee towards the wished-for improvement can be missed. People need to be engaged in the idea that managing people and being managed is constant.

With that in mind, informal one-to-one review discussions are likely to be one of the best formats for appraisal, during which time an employee's work is discussed, reviewed and appraised by a manager using an agreed and understood framework.

A similar informal approach that is becoming increasingly popular in the corporate world is the **360-degree appraisal** by which peers can appraise each other. Even customers and other stakeholders can be involved with this type of open framework.

The discussion at an appraisal interview should focus on: behaviors and outcomes; issues and problems; and constructive development to improve the appraised person's motivation, growth and performance.

It is usual to talk about previously agreed objectives, and how well these have been met, and to explore and agree appropriate objectives for the next period, together with any development needs arising. But the interview should not include any discussion that involves personality or subjective criticisms.

In addition, the appraisal process requires thorough preparation on the part of both appraiser and appraisee. The appraiser needs to be aware of discriminatory legislation and should have the skill and tact to avoid offence or a drift in to personal attacks. The appraiser also needs to be sensitive to, and address, any doubts, fears or anxieties that the appraisee may have before the full appraisal discussion is broached.

Appraisees should:

- Have a clear picture of what is expected of them.
- Be able to discuss priorities.
- Gain a platform to remove confusion when overload occurs.
- Receive feedback on their performance.
- Be heard and respected.
- Be offered constructive guidance on attaining agreed goals.
- Receive help in constructing personal development plans and targets.
- Take ownership of their performance.

Appraisers should meanwhile use the appraisal discussion as an opportunity to:

- Learn at first hand the way the job holder works and performs.
- Get a better understanding of the job holder's potential and needs.
- Motivate the job holder.
- Develop a consistent approach to guidance and encouragement.
- Tackle problems more effectively.
- Improve the communication process.

These targets can often best be achieved through informal, face-to-face discussions with the attitude that any questions can be asked and answered in a free and frank manner – although, in truth, all formats of appraisals can be effective if conducted properly.

To gain the most from an appraisal, the appraised should use the time to discuss their long-term goals within the company and how they feel about their current role. Appraisers should, for their part, take time to reassure the appraised that they are being considered within the company's long-term plans and that their hard work has been noticed – at least that help is being offered for the areas in which they are not performing as well as they ought.

How do I give top-notch performance appraisals?

Performance appraisals can be a valuable part of an effective staff management process when planning for future career development and, in turn, can add to the successful development of the company as whole. When executed correctly, appraisals offer managers an opportunity to give positive feedback to employees, encouraging them to improve their daily performance while making employees aware of the company's long-term aims.

Successful regular appraisals allow managers to become more acutely aware of their team's personal skills and goals, enabling them to manage on a more bespoke level. Appraisals can also provide a formal, recorded, regular review of an individual's performance, and a plan for future development. In short, performance and job appraisals are vital for managing the performance of people and organizations. In truth, appraisals are often in danger of becoming 'tick the box' exercises that cause a great deal of anxiety. Worse still, once they're completed, they are neglected and the information discussed and gained is often left and forgotten until the next scheduled appraisal.

Take the relevant example of the appraisal process adopted by many organizations for contact center agents. An agent is usually appraised on their work rate – for example, how many calls they take or make and how long they spend on each call. In fact, their performance is often governed by extraneous factors such as the call flow rate, the ease with which information is available, and the behavior of other departments. Often their personal performance and skill development is overlooked and their future opportunities are based on a very false set of results.

A 'conventional' appraisal is not always an effective means of performance improvement, therefore, and is often perceived as destructive rather than constructive feedback: a judgement imposed by the hierarchy. Useful feedback, on the other hand, would be information that tells both the manager and the agent how well the systems and processes available to them are functioning and possibly even lead to suggested improvements.

7 Performance Appraisal Tips for Managers/Team Leaders

By focusing on the appropriate goals, your performance Appraisals can help motivate team members and improve performance levels. However, those ideal goals will only go so far without proper execution.

It's essential to make the employee performance Appraisal process as positive of an experience as possible. The following tips can help you learn how to conduct performance Appraisals and build a culture of continuous improvement for your employees.

1. Prepare ahead of time

The first step toward any successful employee appraisal is preparation. Both you and your employees should come prepared to performance Appraisal with notes and talking points. The following items and information can also help.

- A copy of the employee's personnel file.
- Documentation from past Appraisals, including previously set goals, objectives, and notes of interest from prior conversations.
- Feedback and notes from supervisors or coworkers.
- Relevant performance data and customer feedback.
- SWOT analysis.

A shared agenda will also help set a positive, constructive tone for the meeting. Some employees will go into an appraisal expecting an interrogation that will directly impact their future compensation. Giving them an agenda and questions to think about will help them be in a mindset for growth instead of being tightlipped and careful about the information they share.

You can also prepare by asking employees up for appraisal to share any topics they want to discuss. This gesture not only allows the employee to change the agenda to be more valuable for them, but also shows that you're ready to listen. That two-way connection will encourage employees to contribute more to the appraisal and own their path for professional improvement.

2. Speak carefully and ask the right questions

Your choice of words makes a big difference. The right words and tone can help motivate your employees. Meanwhile, less friendly phrases will only make them dread these occasions in the future. In terms of your message, try to focus on specific language that makes employees think in positive terms. For example, emphasize that the goal of each appraisal is to solve problems and identify ways to help both the employee and the company grow. This constructive approach can keep employees engaged and look forward to the future.

The questions you ask are a major part of this process as well. These queries should mirror the same positive approach. The following questions are great ways to emphasize the future and create steps for improvement.

- What goals do you have for the next quarter, year, or other period of time?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of from your work?
- What goals do you want to set for your own development?
- Are there any hurdles that we need to solve together?
- What can I do to improve as your manager?

3. Listen as much as you speak

Even if you know that performance Appraisal s should be a two-way conversation, it can be easy to end up talking most of the appraisal. A two-way conversation should never feel like an interrogation or like only one party is talking. Employees may be hesitant to share too much information out of fear of saying something wrong. It's important to make sure that everyone being Appraisal ed not only feels comfortable enough to share genuine thoughts, but also know that you're actively interested in what they're saying. Make sure to ask them about topics where they can lead the conversation. When an employee has interesting feedback, ask a follow up question to delve into the topic even further. You should also repeat back what you heard from them to confirm that you listened to their points and can clarify if there's any misunderstanding. These practices will help you gather more critical information and show employees that the Appraisal s are an ongoing conversation and not a one-sided affair.

4. Give specific examples for both good work and areas of improvement

Vague or generic criticism doled out during performance appraisals is only going to frustrate and disenchant employees. The best way to provide genuine critical feedback is to have concrete examples for good achievements and areas of improvement. One major benefit of using specific examples is that they provide very clear examples of exemplary or subpar work. Exact examples provide teachable moments of what can be done to improve that provide more weight than general feedback.

Examples also have the benefit of showing that you and your management team are paying attention. Whether you're identifying ways for the employee to improve or providing accolades for good work, it shows the employee that his or her work hasn't gone unnoticed. That level of attention gives your feedback more weight and helps your workers feel like they aren't invisible.

5. Track employee progress

In order to maximize the benefit of performance meetings, it's essential to track that your efforts make a difference. You should do your best to find measurable goals and evaluate your employees' progress over time. When you appraisal these goals, try to answer the following questions

- Do you see positive progression for measurable goals?
- Has employee performance improved, declined, or stayed steady?
- Has employee morale increased, decreased, or stayed steady?
- Is the employee more confident than they were in past Appraisal s?

Over time, you should see employees continue to grow in their roles. If you're not seeing positive results, you may want to change the goals or try a different approach toward maintaining professional growth.

6. Have next steps for after the meeting

The performance appraisal is just one step in a long process. Once the appraisal concludes, you and your employee should appraisal everything that was discussed and complete the following:

- Appraisal notes from what was discussed during the meeting
- Determine and define next steps

A performance conversation shouldn't end when the meeting is over. After the conversation concludes, managers and employees should appraisal notes, define next steps, and follow up with shared comments and feedback. Without these items, performance conversations feel unresolved. If you want your Appraisal to actually improve performance, it's vital to create an action plan and follow through on that plan.

7. Make performance appraisal a regular exercise

The conversation between management and employees doesn't need to be an infrequent occasion. Performance conversations should be a regular event to help encourage improvement. Why wait another 12 months to try and focus on growth when regular feedback can help improve your company even sooner?

Once you finish a performance Appraisal, try and schedule the next conversation as soon as possible. The cadence of these meetings will differ depending on your organization, but quarterly or monthly appraisals are good places to start. These regular meetings will not only keep the conversation going, but also show your employees that you care about their development.

It's also important to note that conversations shouldn't be limited to just performance Appraisal s. Constructive discussions can happen outside of scheduled appraisals. An open-door policy can help employees feel more comfortable talking about potential issues or paths to improvement at other times. This level of openness can help you make continuous performance a part of your culture instead of an unhelpful annual event.

Set Up Your Employees for Success

Your employees are your greatest asset. During the appraisal, both the appraiser and appraisee should make notes of what has been discussed so they have something to refer to during the period between appraisals.

More than anything else, this will allow each team member to effectively plan and meet their targets, and feel much more positive about their next performance appraisal. Ultimately, too, it will help you to become known as a top-notch appraiser.



Self-Check Quiz – 4.5.2

Check your understanding by answering the following questions. Write the correct answer for the following questions.

Question 1: What is the difference between Performance Review and Performance Appraisals?

Question 2: What are the Keys 7 Performance Appraisal Tips for Team Leaders?



Answer Key – 4.5.2

Answer 1:

While the **performance review** is more about understanding strengths and weaknesses and setting goals for the next term, the performance appraisals are more focused on the actual performance of the employee in the past year.

Performance appraisal also includes the evaluation of the employees' competencies such as commitment to the company's core values, willingness to take initiatives, responsibility for tasks, skill set and training, etc.

Answer 2: 7 Performance Appraisal Tips:

- 1-Prepare ahead of time
- 2-Speak carefully and ask the right questions
- 3-Listen as much as you speak
- 4-Give specific examples for both good work and areas of improvement
- 5-Track employee progress
- 6-Have next steps for after the meeting
- 7-Make performance appraisal a regular exercise



Review of Competency Final Checklist

For the performance criteria of the **Module 4: Manage & Track the Team Performance** is given below:

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 4.1

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
4.1.1	Performance management strategies are explained.		
4.1.2	Expectations in performance management are identified.		
4.1.3	Steps of performance reviews are explained.		
4.1.4	Performance management tools for contact center are described.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 4.2

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
4.2.1	Four ways to assess a team member's results are described.		
4.2.2	Quadrants of Leadership matrix are interpreted.		
4.2.3	Performance improvement techniques for different performance patterns are selected.		
4.2.4	Performance patterns are placed into the four quadrants of the leadership matrix.		
4.2.5	Different ways to lead and motivate are described.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 4.3

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
4.3.1	Key areas of Quality Assurance is described for contact center service.		
4.3.2	Scores are collected from Quality Assurance Team.		
4.3.3	Scores are measured and inserted in the Quality Monitoring Scorecard.		
4.3.4	Meetings are arranged to remove subjectivity by calibrating quality scores.		
4.3.5	Balanced scorecard is aligned with organization's four "perspectives" strategy.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 4.4

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
4.4.1	Factors for choosing necessary KPIs are described.		
4.4.2	Matrix or KPIs for the Balanced Scorecard is selected.		
4.4.3	First Contact Resolution (FCR) is calculated.		
4.4.4	Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated.		
4.4.5	Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) is calculated.		
4.4.6	Customers' feedback are reviewed.		
4.4.7	Technologies for best Return on Investment (ROI) are applied.		

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CHECKLIST 4.5

CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I.....			
4.5.1	Individual performance of team members is evaluated using KPIs.		
4.5.2	360-degree feedback are provided to team members.		
4.5.3	Areas of improvement are identified and communicated to the team members.		
4.5.4	Performance appraisal is communicated to HR department.		

Now, I feel ready to undertake my formal competency assessment.

Signed:

Date:

Job Sheet Section



Job Sheet: 01

How to calculate customer satisfaction score (CSAT)

Specification Sheet: 01

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- Any Version of Spreadsheet
- Online tools

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#1. Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)

What is CSAT?

CSAT, or customer satisfaction score, is a commonly used metric that indicates how satisfied customers are with a company's products or services. It's measured through customer feedback and expressed as a percentage (100% would be fantastic – 0% would be terrible).

How do you measure CSAT

CSAT is measured through customer feedback. This is gathered via one or more variations of this question:

"How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the [goods/service] you received?"

Respondents use the following 1 to 5 scale:

1- Very unsatisfied	2- Unsatisfied	3- Neutral	4- Satisfied	5- Very satisfied
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How to Calculate CSAT

you can determine your CSAT in one of two ways: a **composite customer satisfaction score** (which is simply the average of your survey scores) or a more **detailed customer satisfaction score** (which measures the percentage of customers who consider themselves –satisfied" or better).

Formula for Composite Customer Satisfaction Score:

$$\text{CSAT} = (\text{Sum of all scores} / \text{Sum of the maximum possible scores}) * 100$$

Formula for Detailed Customer Satisfaction Score:

$$\text{CSAT} = (\text{Number of satisfied customers (4 and 5)} / \text{Number of survey responses}) * 100$$

How to Get Data

The first step is to send a customer satisfaction survey. Once you receive your responses, you can determine your CSAT in one of two ways: 1. Composite CSAT & 2. Detailed CSAT. Let's review an example. Say you survey a group of customers and receive the following responses:

Respondent	Respondent score	Maximum score	CSAT Calculator	
Customer A	3	5	Sum of all scores	35
Customer B	4	5		
Customer C	3	5	Sum of the maximum possible scores	50
Customer D	5	5		
Customer E	5	5	Composite CSAT Score:	35 ÷ 50 = 0.7 x 100 =
Customer F	2	5		
Customer G	4	5	Number of satisfied customers (4 and 5)	5
Customer H	3	5		
Customer I	5	5	Number of survey responses	10
Customer J	1	5		
Total	35	50	Detailed CSAT Score:	5 ÷ 10 = 0.5 x 100 =
				50%

We recommend using the **Detailed customer satisfaction score** calculation, as it's more useful for determining the number of happy customers.

Benchmark: Contact/Call centers typically want to achieve **CSAT scores of around 80%**.



Job Sheet: 02

How to calculate Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Specification Sheet: 02

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Net Promoter Score (NPS)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#2. Net Promoter Score (NPS)

What is NPS?

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a customer loyalty and satisfaction measurement taken from asking customers how likely they are to recommend your product or service to others on a scale of 0-10—but there's a lot more to the story than that. Beyond support, companies can also use NPS surveys to gauge how their customer base feels about their products, services, or the business as a whole.

How do you measure NPS

NPS measures customer perception based on one simple question:

How likely is it that you would recommend [Organisation X/Product Y/Service Z] to a friend or colleague?

Promoters (respondents who answer 9–10) are very satisfied, happy customers and will most likely recommend you to others.

Passives (respondents who answer 7–8) are satisfied but not likely to recommend your products or services.

Detractors (respondents who answer 6 and below) are dissatisfied and will not encourage others to patronize your business.

How to Calculate NPS

To calculate your final NPS score – just subtract the Total no. of detractors from the Total no. of promoters and divide by total no. of Respondents. The formula is:

$$\text{Net Promoter Score (NPS)} = \frac{(\text{Total No. of Promoters} - \text{Total No. of Detractors})}{\text{Total No. of Respondents}}$$

How to Get Data

You can get NPS Data, by using Transactional or Relational NPS Survey programmes:

Relational NPS surveys are deployed on a regular basis (i.e. quarterly or annually). The goal is to get a periodic pulse on your customers and understand how they feel about your company overall. This data can be used to check the health of customer relationships year-on-year and provide a benchmark for company success.

Transactional NPS surveys are sent out after the customer interacts with your company (e.g. during a purchase or support call). They are used to understand customer satisfaction on a granular level and provide feedback about a very specific topic.

It's best to use both types to understand your customer at macro and micro levels. For example, Perhaps 1,000 customers answer an NPS survey. 250 people give a rating between one and six, 500 people give a nine or a ten, and the rest share a score of seven or eight. Below is the NPS calculation for this scenario (Consider above equation in practice.) :

Calculator	Total No. of Promoter (9 & 10)	500
	Total No. of Passive (7 & 8)	250
	Total No. of Detractor (0-6)	250
	Total Respondents	1000
	NPS Calculation:	(500-250)/1000
	NPS Score	25

The final NPS is always an absolute numerical value, not a percentage. The Benchmark of Good NPS Score is almost 50. Yet, the best benchmark is almost always internal.



Job Sheet: 03

How to calculate Customer Effort Score (CES)

Specification Sheet: 03

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Customer Effort Score (CES)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#3. Customer Effort Score (CES)

What is CES?

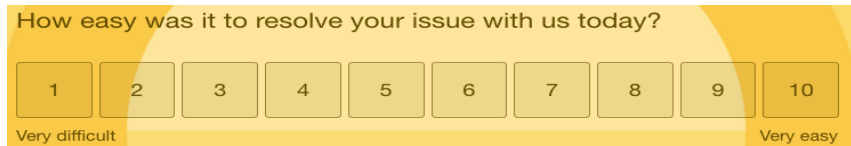
CES is a single-item metric that measures how much effort a customer has to put into an experience with a particular brand. These interactions include resolving an issue with a customer service agent, buying or returning a product, getting an answer to a question, and more.

How do you measure CES

Customer Effort Score surveys are short questionnaires sent to current customers to gauge how easy or difficult it was for them to complete a specific task. There are typically three types of CES surveys companies use:

A 0–10 scale (where 0 equals “very difficult,” and 10 equals “very easy”) or a Likert scale of five to seven choices ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”

Example of 10-point scale:



A straightforward agree/disagree questionnaire

A simple questionnaire with an emoji or emoticon rating system 😊 / 😐 / 😞

How to Calculate CES

If you sent a 10-point scale or a Likert scale survey, use this CES formula to find your score:

$$\text{Sum of CES scores} \div \text{Number of survey responses} = \text{CES}$$

$$\text{Percentage of positive responses} - \text{Percentage of negative responses} = \text{CES}$$

How to Get Data

Once you receive the CES survey results, it’s time to calculate your Customer Effort Score. If you sent a 10-point scale or a Likert scale survey, use this CES formula to find your score: Say you send out a survey, and 300 respondents complete it. Of these responses, 250 of them are positive, and 50 are negative. First, you’ll determine the percentages of each type of response:

CES Calculator	Total No. of Positive Responses	250
	Total No. of Negative Responses	50
	Total Respondents	300
	Total Percentages of Positive Responses	$[(250 \div 300) \times 100] \times 100$ = 83.33%
	Total Percentages of Negative Responses	$[(50 \div 300) \times 100] \times 100$ = 16.66%
	Find CES by subtracting the negative percentage from the positive percentage:	83.33 – 16.66
	CES Score	66.67

It’s critical to remember that a high CES is a good CES. But also bear in mind that there isn’t an established benchmark or industry standard for CES. You’re only competing against your own previous scores. Regardless, CES scores are important customer satisfaction metrics to track regularly.



Job Sheet: 04

How to calculate Customer lifetime value (CLV)

Specification Sheet: 04

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Customer Effort Score (CES)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#4. Customer lifetime value (CLV)

What is CLV?

Customer lifetime value, in short CLV, is a prediction of how much an average customer will spend on your products or services over the entire relationship with your business. It is about the long-term value of repeat customers. CLV calculation is a tool that enables you to target marketing efforts. Make better decisions about customer retention and segmentation strategies. Aiming for higher CLV means improving profitability.

How do you measure CLV

CLV can be calculated at a company level (i.e. the average CLV across all your customers), a customer segment level (the CLV of distinct groups within your customer base) or an individual level (the CLV of each individual customer you deal with).

Average purchase value — the value of all customer purchases over a particular timeframe (a year is usually easiest), divided by the number of purchases in that period

Average purchase frequency — divide the number of purchases in that same time period by the number of individual customers who made a transaction over the same period

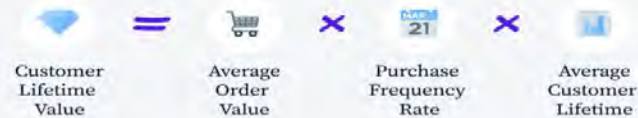
Customer value — the average purchase frequency multiplied by the average purchase value

Average customer lifespan — the average length of time a customer continues buying from you

How to Calculate CLV

A simple CLV formula looks like this:

Customer Lifetime Value = Average Order Value X Purchase Frequency Rate X Average Customer Lifetime



How to Get Data

To calculate customer lifetime value, make sure you pick a certain period to gather the data—for example, a year.

1. Take your total revenue and divide it by the number of buys. That's your average order value (often abbreviated to AOV). 2. Next, divide the total number of buys by the total number of unique customers. That's your purchase frequency rate. 3. Lastly, Average Customer Lifetime is the number of days between the first and last order date, divided by 365 (to convert into years).

CLV Calculator	Number of days between the first and last order		1220
	Number of unique customers		6
	Number of buys		12
	Total revenue		122
	Calculate Average Order Value (AOV):	total revenue and divide it by the number of buys	10.17
	Calculate Purchase Frequency (PF) Rate:	divide the total number of buys by the total number of unique customers	2
	Calculate Avg. Customer Lifetime (CL):	number of days between the first and last order date, divided by 365	3.34
	Calculate CLV		AOV X PF Rate X Average CL
CLV Score		68	

It's critical to remember that a high CES is a good CES. But also bear in mind that there isn't an established benchmark or industry standard for CES. You're only competing against your own previous scores. Regardless, CES scores are important customer satisfaction metrics to track regularly.



Job Sheet: 05

How to Measure Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)

Specification Sheet: 05

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)** , first we need to follow the below steps:

#4. Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)

What is CLI?

The customer loyalty index is a standardized tool to track customer loyalty and it incorporates the values of **NPS, repurchasing, and upselling**. Key benefits of the CLI customer loyalty metric.

Its standardization enables tracking customer loyalty over time

Enables benchmarking – comparison to competitive products or companies.

Finds weaknesses in customer loyalty.

How do you measure CLI

It is a survey that asks the following three questions:

Q-1 How likely are you to try some other products or services of ours someday?

Q-2 How likely are you to try some other products or services of ours someday?

Q-3 How likely are you to try some other products or services of ours someday?

It is a scale between 1-6 (1 is considered very likely, 6 – not likely).

The CLI is measured when we average the values of all three questions.

The process of CLI index evaluation

THE ASSESSMENT SCALE OF LOYALTY

0 – 69 Below average loyalty

70 – 79 Average loyalty

80 – 100 Above average loyalty

CLI Calculator

CLI is calculated by taking the average of customer answers to these three (Q1,Q2 & Q3) questions. For example, our average answers scores on a scale of 1 to 6 for the three questions shown in table:

	Q1- Answer scores:	Q-2 Answer scores:	Q-3 Answer scores:
	1 = 100	1 = 100	1 = 100
	2 = 80	2 = 80	2 = 80
	3 = 60	3 = 60	3 = 60
	4 = 40	4 = 40	4 = 40
	5 = 20	5 = 20	5 = 20
	6 = 0	6 = 0	6 = 0
Average Score	80	70	90
CLI Score	(80+70+90)/3= 80		
SCALE OF LOYALTY	Above average loyalty		

The advantage is that this score incorporates all of the loyalty values. Also, by consistently sending this questionnaire over time, you can systematically track changes.

The downside of this approach is that you ask directly for the customer's intention, which is less reliable than measuring actual behavior.



Job Sheet: 06

How to calculate Customer Churn Rate (CCR)

Specification Sheet: 06

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Customer Churn Rate (CCR)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#6. Customer Churn Rate (CCR)

What is CCR?

The churn rate, also known as the rate of attrition or customer churn, is the rate at which customers stop doing business with an entity. It is most commonly expressed as the percentage of service subscribers who discontinue their subscriptions within a given time period. It is also the rate at which employees leave their jobs within a certain period. For a company to expand its clientele, its growth rate (measured by the number of new customers) must exceed its churn rate.

How to Calculate CCR

To determine your company's churn rate, choose a period of time you want to measure and identify the following values:

Number of customers at the start of the time period (X)

Number of customers lost during that time period (Y)

Then, use the following formula to determine your customer churn rate (Z) as a percentage.

Customer churn rate formula: $(Y/X) \times 100 = Z$

Sample Data

For example, if a business had 100 existing customers at the start of the month and lost 10 customers by the end of the month, then it would have a monthly churn rate of 10 percent.

CRR Calculator

Customer Churn Rate:

$$(10 / 100) \times 100 = 10\%$$

This simple formula can be used across any time period, whether that's a year, a month, or even a day. **But companies may face situations that require more complex churn rate formulas. Which are: 1. Adjusted customer churn rate 2. Seasonal customer churn rate 3. Revenue churn rate**

How to Calculate Adjusted customer churn rate

To calculate your adjusted customer churn rate, you'll need the following values:

Number of customers at the start of the period (W)

Number of customers at the end of the period (X)

Number of churned customers during that time period (Y)

Then, use the following formula to determine your customer churn rate (Z) as a percentage:

Adjusted customer churn rate formula: $(Y / [(W+X) / 2]) \times 100 = Z\%$

Sample Data

Let's say a dog treat subscription box was growing quickly but wanted to account for both lost and acquired customers within the month. At the start of March, the company had 15,000 customers. During the month, 5,000 new customers sign up to get their pups the latest tantalising treats, and 5 percent of the total customers (1,000) unsubscribe.

CRR Calculator

Adjusted Customer Churn Rate:

$$(1,000 / [(15,000 + 5,000) / 2]) \times 100 = 5.71\%$$

If we were using our original formula, the churn rate for March would seem to be higher—at 6.66 percent—since the new customers wouldn't be accounted for. But when using our adjusted customer formula, which accounts for the new customers acquired, the churn rate drops to 5.71 percent.

How to Calculate Seasonal customer churn rate

To calculate a seasonal business' customer churn rate, choose a period of time you'd like to measure and identify the following values:

The total number of customers you had during the busy period (W)

The churn rate during your busy period (X)

The total number of customers you had during the slow period (Y)

The churn rate during your slow period (Z)

Then, use the following formula to determine your revenue churn rate (A) as a percentage:

Seasonal customer churn rate formula: $\{ [(W \times X) + (Y \times Z)] / (W+Y) \} \times 100 = A\%$

Sample Data

Let's take our tutoring company as an example and say that, from August through May, it usually has around 100 customers and a churn rate of 5 percent. At the end of each school year, the vast majority of its customers—approximately 80 percent—will churn. Twenty percent might stay on throughout the summer months to support their summer school learning or work on subject areas that need improving, but there's a small churn rate of 5 percent. In August, the number of students in tutoring will generally balloon back up to 100 or more and stay fairly steady.

CRR Calculator

Seasonal Customer Churn Rate:

$$\{ [(100 \times 0.05) + (20 \times 0.05)] / (100+20) \} \times 100 = 5\%$$

using the simplified churn rate formula, its churn rate would appear artificially high. The 80 percent churn rate in May would pull the yearly average churn rate from up to 11 percent. Using the seasonal churn rate formula above, however, we get a weighted average of 5 percent.

How to Calculate Revenue customer churn rate

To calculate revenue churn, choose a period of time you'd like to measure and identify the following values:

Churned revenue (X)

Total revenue (Y)

Then, use the following formula to determine your revenue churn rate (Z) as a percentage:

Revenue churn rate formula: $(X/Y) \times 100 = Z\%$

Sample Data

Let's say our corporate networking SaaS platform wanted to calculate its monthly revenue churn rate, knowing it had a customer churn rate of 10 percent. If the company's churn was mostly made up of enterprise customers, that 10-percent customer churn rate might be costing them \$30,000 in monthly recurring revenue (MRR).

If the company's total MRR was \$120,000, its monthly revenue churn rate would be a whopping 25 percent. That's a much bigger hit to their revenue than their 10-percent customer churn rate might lead you to expect—and a sign that the company might want to take a closer look at its enterprise offering.

CRR Calculator

Revenue Customer Churn Rate:

$$(30,000 / 120,000) \times 100 = 25\%$$

For any business with variable pricing, calculating revenue churn is going to be just as important as understanding customer churn. The more granular a company is with churn analysis, the more effective it can be when working to reduce churn with its customers.



Job Sheet: 07

How to calculate Customer Retention Rate (CRR)

Specification Sheet: 07

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Customer Retention Rate (CRR)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#7. Customer Retention Rate (CRR)

What is CRR?

Customer retention rate measures the number of customers a company retains over a given period of time. It's expressed as a percentage of a company's existing customers who remain loyal within that time frame.

Any company that wants to succeed must keep a close eye on its customer retention metrics.

There's a simple, economic reason why customer retention is so important: Keeping your existing customers is a lot less expensive than trying to win new ones. Loyal customers also contribute to your business' health by providing referrals, promoting your brand on social media, and giving feedback to improve your product or service.

How to Calculate CRR

1. To determine your retention rate, first identify the time frame you want to study

2. Next, collect the number of existing customers at the start of the time period (S)

3. Then find the number of total customers at the end of the time period (E)

4. Finally, determine the number of new customers added within the time period (N)

Customer Retention Rate formula:

$$[(E-N)/S] \times 100 = \text{CRR}$$

Sample Data

Say a company had 100 customers at the start of the period (S), ended the period with 100 customers (E), and added 10 customers over the period (N). They would have a customer retention rate of 90 percent: $[(100-10)/100] \times 100 = 90$ percent.

CRR Calculator	Customers you have on December 31, 2022. (E)	100
	Customers gained within December 31, 2022. (N)	10
	Customers at the January 1, 2022 (S)	100
	Calculation of Customer Retention Rate	$[(100-10)/100] \times 100$
	Customer Retention Rate (CRR) in (%)	90%

Retention rate vs. churn rate

Your customer churn rate is simply the inverse of your customer retention rate. For instance, if your retention rate is 90 percent, then your churn rate is 10 percent. The simplest way to determine your churn rate is to take the number of churned customers during a given time frame, divide it by the total number of customers at the beginning of that same time period, and then multiply the result by 100.

While the primary metrics for understanding customer loyalty are customer retention rate and churn rate, these measurements can't tell you everything you need to know about how and why customers return or leave. There are several other customer retention metrics you can use in conjunction with retention and churn rates to cultivate a loyal customer base.



Job Sheet: 08

How to calculate Customer acquisition cost (CAC)

Specification Sheet: 08

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Customer acquisition cost (CAC)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#8. Customer acquisition cost (CAC)

What is CAC?

Customer acquisition cost is how much money a company spends to gain a new customer. It helps businesses determine the return on investment (ROI) of their customer acquisition efforts. CAC includes a company's spending on the following:

Marketing and advertising: employee salaries, subscriptions to tools/SaaS, relevant technology (such as data-collection software or Google Ads), production of any creative elements, traditional and/or digital campaigns, etc.

Sales: employee salaries, relevant technology (such as lead generation and email management tools), inventory upkeep, travel expenses, gifts for potential new customers, etc.

How to Calculate CAC

In below, The four simple steps to calculate CAC manually.

Step-1: - When calculating CAC, the first step is defining the period you want to assess. This can be either a month, quarter, or year and will help you narrow down the amount of data you need to pull.

Step-2: - Take all your sales and marketing expenses during the chosen time period and add them together.

Step-3: - Once you've added your sales and marketing expenses, you'll want to divide that total by the number of new customers you gained during the time frame you're evaluating.

Step-4: - After completing steps one through three, you'll know the estimated cost of acquiring a new customer.

Customer acquisition cost (CAC) formula:	CAC= (Total Marketing + Sales Expenses) / No. of New Customer
---	--

Sample Data	Company X spent 150K on marketing efforts and 100K on sales initiatives over the last quarter. During this time, Company X acquired 300 new paying customers. That means Company X's CAC for that quarter is 833:
--------------------	---

CAC Calculator	Last Quarter Company's expenses on marketing efforts	150,000.00
	Last Quarter Company's expenses on sales initiatives	100,000.00
	Company acquired new customer over last quarter	300
	Calculation of Customer acquisition cost	(150,000 + 100,000) / 300 = 833
	Customer acquisition cost (CAC)	833.00

What is a good customer acquisition cost?

As with most things in life, a "good" customer acquisition cost is relative. To determine whether your CAC is too high or too low, you need to know the amount of revenue coming in from your existing customers. For this reason, the **CLV:CAC** ratio is a better measure of your business' health than CAC alone.

Customer lifetime value (CLV) refers to the amount of money the average customer will contribute to a company over their entire lifecycle, so the **CLV:CAC ratio** captures expected revenue.

To calculate CLV, multiply your company's annual revenue by the average customer lifespan (this gives you the revenue earned from one customer). Then, compare it to the initial cost of acquiring that customer.

While there isn't a "right" **CLV:CAC ratio**, the agreed-upon sweet spot is at least **3:1**. This means that, ideally, you spend approximately 33 percent of the average LV on acquiring new customers.



Job Sheet: 09

How to calculate First Contact Resolution (FCR)

Specification Sheet: 09

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **First Contact Resolution (FCR)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#9 First Contact Resolution (FCR)

What is FCR?

First contact resolution—also known as first call resolution or first touch resolution—is the percentage of customer tickets that are resolved by agents on the first attempt. Examples include an agent solving an issue with a single phone call, chat conversation, or email response.

First contact resolution (FCR) can help increase agent efficiency and drive improvements in the customer experience. First contact resolution, when done right, is a win-win: Customers are happy, and so are your call center agents.

Call center metrics like first contact resolution are beneficial for all parties involved. Tracking FCR is a good way to get feedback about how your company is doing. And, you can gauge how well your support team is meeting customer expectations.

How to Calculate FCR

To calculate your company's first contact resolution, take the number of customer issues (tickets) resolved in a single interaction (email response, phone call, chat session, etc.) and divide it by the total number of issues (tickets) received.

First contact resolution formula

$$(\#) \text{ issues resolved on first contact} / (\#) \text{ total no issues} \times 100 = \text{First contact resolution rate (\%)}$$

Sample Data

Choose the amount of tickets/incidents from a specific period of time – one year, one month, all time, etc. – and be consistent in entering the metrics from that time for accuracy. Let's say that over a month, your customer service team has dealt with 175 questions and requests from your customers. Out of that, 112 of these issues were resolved at first contact.

FCR Calculator	(#) issues resolved on first contact	112
	(#) total no issues	175
	Calculation of First Contact Resolution (FCR)	(112 / 175) x 100
	First Contact Resolution (FCR) Rate (In %)	64%

What is a good first contact resolution rate?

According to the Service Quality Measurement (SQM) Group, the industry standard for a good FCR rate falls between 70 and 79 percent, which means about 30 percent of tickets take more than one interaction to resolve.

A first contact resolution rate of 80 percent or higher is considered –world-class,– according to the SQM Group. But only 5 percent of call centers achieve that distinction.

Global First Contact Resolution Benchmark KPI: ~70%



Job Sheet: 10

How to calculate First Response Time (FRT)

Specification Sheet: 10

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **First Response Time (FRT)** , first we need to follow the below steps:

#10 First Response Time (FRT)

What is FRT?

First Response Time (FRT) indicates how long your customers have to wait before getting a response to their inquiry. First response time is reported as a measure of time— minutes, hours, or days. It's calculated by taking the total of first response times and dividing it by the number of cases resolved, to find the average.

Given that there are many KPIs for support teams that can be used to measure support performance, you might be wondering why this one, in particular, is so important. And the answer is that it plays a significant role in customer satisfaction.

How to Calculate FRT

You can calculate your average First Response Time based on a sum of all first response times divided by the number of resolved tickets. FRTs are usually quoted in minutes, hours and days.

First Response Time formula

$$\text{Sum of First Response Times} / \text{Number of Tickets} = \text{Average First Response Time}$$

How to Get Data

All the following data can be pulled from the contact centers Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system or, failing this, can be gathered from Call Detail Records (CDRs). Many companies include a baseline FRT in their service level agreements (SLA), which means they must respond to customers within a specified timeframe. Fortunately, ticketing systems like Zendesk and Help Scout can automatically calculate FRT for you.

FRT Calculator	Sum of First Response Times = (in Sec)	64000
	Number of Tickets=	800
	Calculate Average First Response Time=	64,000 seconds ÷ 800 resolved tickets
	Average First Response Time (in Sec)	80

Benchmarking for success

We've collected some stats to give you a good overview of how FRT affects support across customer service channels.	Over the phone	Less than 3 Minutes	Social Media	60 Minutes or Less
	Live chat	Reply within 1 min and 36 seconds	E-mail	Reply within a day

It can be a good idea to calculate your FRT based on the median instead of the average to avoid outliers skewing the data.

Your calculation should also exclude automated responses (like those from chatbots or virtual assistants) and tickets that arrive outside of your stated business hours.

You could also filter your First Response Time by agent, team or time zone to see where improvements can be made.



Job Sheet: 11

How to calculate Average Resolution Time (ART)

Specification Sheet: 11

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Average Resolution Time (ART)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#11 Average Resolution Time (ART)

What is ART?

Time to Resolution is an essential metric in call centres that measure the average time between creating the customer interaction and when labeling that interaction Resolved. Average Resolution Time (ART) or Time to Resolution or Mean Time To Resolution (MTTR) is the average time call centre agents take to solve opened tickets in a specified period.

The average resolution time in call centres varies depending on the complexity of the service issue and the ratio of available call centre agents to queued tickets for the given period. If the Average Resolution Time (ART) increases, the call centre manager should investigate the underlying problem and try to solve it.

How to Calculate ART

Using the basic technique below, you may evaluate customer service.

You must divide the number of cases resolved by the sum of all times to Resolution. For example, this displays the support team's Average Resolution Time (ART).

Average Resolution Time (ART) formula

$$\text{Average Time to Resolution} = \text{Sum of All Times to Resolution} \div \text{Total Number of Cases Resolved}$$

How to Get Data

All the following data can be pulled from the contact centers Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system or, failing this, can be gathered from Call Detail Records (CDRs). In below, Using sample data for ART Calculation:

ART Calculator	Sum of All Times to Resolution = (in Sec)	72000
	Total Number of Cases Resolved	800
	Calculate Average Resolution Time (ART)=	72,000 seconds ÷ 800 resolved cases
	Average Resolution Time (ART) (in Sec)	90

Industrial Benchmarking of Average Resolution Time

The average benchmark of Average Resolution Time for all industries is under 8:30 minutes. For various industries the recent benchmarking (as of 2021) varies as follows:	All Industry	8 min 30 sec	Ecommerce	6 min
	Retail	6 min	Shipping	4 min
	Service	9 min	Telecommunication	9 min

What is a good Average Resolution Time?

Typically, a good Average Resolution Time is within **5 minutes**, where a customer is happy to wait to get the resolution to their query.

Note:

Customer satisfaction is high when the average resolution time is short. However, when the resolution time is longer, it shows a more excellent FCR, which means fewer customer encounters are required to fix the problem.

Once you have your Average Resolution Time (ART), Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) rate, and Net Promoter Score (NPS), you can determine the pace of your customer service and decide whether it's a good or a poor score.



Job Sheet: 12

How to calculate Average Handle Time (AHT)

Specification Sheet: 12

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Average Handle Time (AHT)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#12 Average Handle Time (AHT)

What is AHT?

Average handle time (AHT) is the average call duration that it takes to completely resolve a customer service issue or transaction from beginning to end. It includes not only the length of the customer service call itself but also other factors like average customer hold time, number of rings it takes to reach an agent, amount of time customer spends interacting with IVR menu, follow-up calls, and after-call tasks.

Why is AHT Important?

Average Handle Time is important because it's an excellent metric to measure the effectiveness of your customer service department and your call center's overall level of customer satisfaction.

Despite the increased number of available communication channels, nearly 70% of consumers say they still prefer to connect with customer service agents over the phone.

But a 2021 TCN study shows 59% of customers say lost/wasted time waiting for a resolution is their biggest complaint about call centers. Interestingly, excessive average handle time is even more frustrating to customers than not having the issue resolved at all.

How to Calculate AHT: Average Handle Time (AHT) formula:-

$$\text{(Talk Time + Hold Time + After Call Work) / Number of Customer Calls} = \text{Average Handle Time}$$

Sample Data	Finding average handle time for one day in a small contact center, which shown in AHT Calculator:
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AHT Calculator	A total daily talk time (In minutes):	1500
	A total daily hold time (In minutes):	2200
	A total daily after call work time (In minutes):	3000
	Total customer conversations per day:	250
	Calculate Average Handle Time (AHT)=	1,500+ 2,200+3000 = 6,700 6,700/250 = 26.8 minutes
	Average Handle Time (AHT) (in Min)	26.8

What is a good Average Handle Time (AHT)?

Statistics show that the *average* handle time is between 6.46 minutes and 6.73 minutes depending on the industry — about 6.6 minutes as an overall average.

But just because 6.6 minutes is the average AHT doesn't mean it's a "good" average handle time for your contact center. A Cornell University report **Contact Centre Metric Industry Standard – 6 minutes and 3 seconds.**

Note:

Note that a call center's average handle time is different from its First Call Resolution (FCR) rate. FCR measures the percentage of customer service phone calls where the caller's issue is completely resolved on their first contact with a representative.

In contrast, average call handle time measures the entire amount of time that it takes for an agent to resolve a customer service issue, whether that issue is resolved on the first phone call or requires multiple follow-up calls.

Average handle time also applies to any other communication channel used to manage customer service queries, like live chat messaging, SMS texting, email, or video calling.



Job Sheet: 13

How to calculate Average Speed of Answer (ASA)

Specification Sheet: 13

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Average Speed of Answer (ASA)** , first we need to follow the below steps:

#13 Average Speed of Answer (ASA)

What is ASA?

The average speed of answer is a call centre metric used to measure the average amount of time it takes for an agent to answer inbound calls. While this includes the time that the phone rings, it does not count the time customers spend in the queue or speaking to an interactive voice response (IVR) system.

Why is ASA Important?

Call centre ASA is one of the most popular call centre metrics to track because when customers experience long wait times, they will likely hang up the call and may never call back. This is a missed opportunity to connect with your customer, promote your brand, and potentially upsell. If your ASA is higher than average, finding ways to reduce it is vital.

You can boost your customer satisfaction rate and promote greater call centre productivity by incorporating a few simple fixes into your system. Such as skills-based routing and queue callback can help improve the average speed of answer by matching the right agent with the right problem.

How to Calculate ASA:

Each customer service representative will have an individual ASA. To calculate it, divide the total waiting time of the answered calls by the total number of calls taken.

Average Speed of Answer (ASA) formula:-

$$\text{Average Speed of Answer} = \frac{\text{Total Waiting Time for Answered Calls}}{\text{Total Number of Answered Calls}}$$

Sample Data	All the following data can be pulled from the contact centers Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system or, failing this, can be gathered from Call Detail Records (CDRs). Let the number of callers in a day = 100 & Total waiting time for all callers = 1 hour. Now put the values in the following formula,
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ASA Calculator	Total Waiting Time for Answered Calls = (in Sec):	3600
	Total Number of Answered Calls:	100
	Calculate Average Speed of Answer (ASA) =	$1*60*60/100$
	Average Speed of Answer (ASA) (in Sec)	36

What is a good Average Speed of Answer (ASA)?

ASA simply refers to the time between when the phone rings, and an agent answers. It doesn't include the time the customer spends going through your IVR tree or waiting on hold

Global Average Speed of Answer Benchmark KPI: ~28 seconds

Note: How ASA Impacts Other Call Center Metrics

You can save money and increase customer satisfaction by actively managing your ASA. This will positively impact your employees as well. When call center agents don't have a huge queue to work through, they are less likely to be stressed and will in turn provide better service. A good customer service organization is only as good as the employees they retain.

You'll also be less likely to have customers abandoning calls only to call back later in the day for the same issue. Remember, you want your team to increase their first-call resolution (FCR) rate as time goes on.

Contact centers that track ASA and other KPIs have the ability to provide superior service to clients, thus in turn benefitting both parties.



Job Sheet: 14

How to calculate After-call work (ACW)

Specification Sheet: 14

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **After-call work (ACW)**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#14 After-call work (ACW)

What is ACW?

After-call work is the activity of an agent regarding the call that encompasses filling data in a CRM system, customer card, or database. Mainly ACW call center routine consists of filling in the information in the database.

After-call work, or ACW, refers to the tasks that immediately follow a call with a customer. ACW is an important part of the average handle time (AHT) for a call representative. Your average handle time may indicate how many customers you're able to serve each day. Leaders often use software to track and analyze ACW tasks and time for teams and individuals. Longer ACW times may mean that callers are waiting longer to reach a representative and can also indicate representatives may require further training on ACW-related tasks.

Why is ACW Important?

This metric is a measure of the average amount of time agents spend doing wrap up work – that is, the necessary busywork that needs to be done at the conclusion of every call in order to properly categorize and track the interaction.

Measuring ACW time gives you valuable insights into how to tackle an agent's after-work time. To measure this time successfully, take the Automatic Call Distribution system (ACD) as a source for collecting data about each agent and how they use their billable time.

How to Calculate ACW:

And it's easy to calculate the average after-work time for a particular agent. Use this formula for calculations: Total after call work time/ Total number of calls agent handled = Average ACW time for an agent.

After-call work (ACW) formula:-

Total after call work time/ Total number of calls agent handled = Average ACW time for an agent.

How to get Data?	Thus gathering insights from the ACD system about the (not ready) mode you can calculate the average ACW.
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ACW Calculator	Total after call work time = (in Sec):	3600
	Total number of calls agent handled:	100
	Calculate Average ACW time for an agent =	3600/100
	Average ACW time (in Sec)	36

What is a good After-call work (ACW)?

The more time agents can spend on the phones the better, so naturally call centers like to keep their average after call work time as low as possible.

Note: After Call Work Is Performed in –Wrap Time”

The total time that an advisor works on ACW is known as –wrap time” or –wrap-up time” and, although the customer is not involved at this stage, ACW is a part of the interaction and is therefore included in the total handling time for the call. It is important to remember this when calculating your contact centre's Average Handling Time (AHT), which is a vital metric to calculate when determining how many staff are needed in the contact centre – if you use an Erlang Calculator.

To reduce wrap time, and therefore AHT, some of the ACW can be carried out during the call, so long as the quality of the call isn't impacted by the agent doing so.



Job Sheet: 15

How to Calculate Call Abandonment Rate

Specification Sheet: 15

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Call Abandonment Rate** , first we need to follow the below steps:

#15 Call Abandonment Rate

What is Abandonment Rate?

The call abandonment rate metric will tell you the percentage of customers who were waiting on hold for so long that they simply gave up and disconnected.

Why is Abandonment Rate Important?

The call abandonment rate is a key performance indicator that businesses need to diligently track to ensure excellent customer service and team efficiency. Make accurate evaluations by using the formula mentioned above. Take advantage of the reporting tools available on your call center software to monitor abandoned calls in real time

Call center abandonment is an important KPI that must be monitored constantly. There are also a lot of pitfalls that you might encounter when trying to measure it correctly. Sometimes the numbers alone don't tell the entire story. You need the context behind those numbers to truly get a better idea of what is going on in your center.

How to Calculate Abandonment Rate:

To calculate the abandon rate at your call center, use the following 2 equations:

Call Abandon Rate Formula-1:

$$\text{Call abandonment rate} = (\text{Number of calls placed} - \text{Number of calls handled}) / \text{Number of calls placed} * 100$$

Call Abandon Rate Formula-2: Excluding Short Calls!

$$\text{Call abandonment rate} = (\text{Number of inbound calls} - \text{Number of calls abandoned in five seconds or less} - \text{number of calls successfully handled}) / (\text{Number of inbound calls} - \text{number of calls abandoned in five seconds or less}) * 100$$

The best practice for accurate call abandonment rate calculation is to exclude calls that lasted less than five to ten seconds (the number will depend on the trends you observe in your contact center). The assumption is that these callers dialed the wrong number and only realized it after being connected. Thus, these calls are not legitimate customer inquiries.

Sample Data

All the following data can be pulled from the contact centers Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system or, failing this, can be gathered from Call Detail Records (CDRs). If you received 100 calls in your call center queues in a single day, had 25 of them that were abandoned in five seconds or less, but also had 70 of them that were successfully handled, the equation would look like:

AR Calculator

Number of inbound calls =	100
Number of calls successfully handled =	70
Number of calls abandoned in five seconds or less =	25
Call Abandon Rate Calculation=	$(100 - 25 - 70) / (100 - 25) * 100$
Call Abandon Rate (in %)	6.66%

Note that of the remaining five calls that were not either abandoned or successfully handled, they could have been attributed to simple disconnections, an inability to reach a live agent, or a wide array of different factors.

What is a good Abandonment Rate?

It will vary depending on the industry and the type of customers you support, but if your average abandonment rate is under 5% then you're doing pretty well.

Global Abandonment Rate Benchmark KPI: ~9%



Job Sheet: 16

How to Calculate Occupancy

Specification Sheet: 16

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Occupancy Rate**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#16 Occupancy

What is Occupancy?

Occupancy rate refers to the percentage of time that agents spend directly dealing with customers. Call-related activity includes hold, talk-time and after-call work (ACW), but it can also include time spent on emails, chats and other non-voice channels.

Why is Occupancy Rate Important?

Understanding occupancy is essential for managers to evaluate and improve. Leaders can see how busy their agents are, what staffing requirements they have throughout the day and how effective the service they provide is. An occupancy rate of 85% in the contact center means that agents were working with customers for 85% of the time they were scheduled to work with customers. That means

How to Calculate Occupancy Rate:

To calculate contact center occupancy, first get a total of the amount of time each of its agents spends on "call-related activity" – from the time that they sign in, to the time that they sign out – on a day-to-day basis. This is called the "total handling time"–

Occupancy Rate Formula:

Total handling time: Total Contact Time (Talk Time + After Call Work) /Total Logged-in Time

Agent Occupancy Rate (%) = Total handling time ÷ Total logged time × 100

How to Get Data

Below is an example of how to use this formula, using data from a team of seven contact center agents. (All the data included in this table can be found in the contact center's ACD system)

Agent	Signed In	Signed Out	Total Logged in Time	Total Talk Time	Total Hold Time	Total ACW Time	Total Handling Time
Agent 1	8:54	14:02	308 mins	195 mins	21 mins	58 mins	274 mins
Agent 2	8:56	13:58	302 mins	182 mins	14 mins	62 mins	258 mins
Agent 3	8:56	17:30	514 mins	323 mins	37 mins	92 mins	452 mins
Agent 4	8:57	17:32	515 mins	304 mins	30 mins	101 mins	435 mins
Agent 5	8:59	17:26	507 mins	311 mins	34 mins	94 mins	439 mins
Agent 6	13:25	17:39	254 mins	165 mins	11 mins	49 mins	225 mins
Agent 7	13:29	17:31	242 mins	151 mins	13 mins	52 mins	216 mins
Cumulative			2,642 mins				2,296 mins

Occupancy Calculator

Total handling time = (In minutes)

2296

Total logged time = (In minutes)

2642

$$\text{Occupancy Rate} = \frac{2,296 \text{ Minutes}}{2,642 \text{ Minutes}} \times 100 = 86.9\%$$

Occupancy Rate

86.90%

What is a good Occupancy Rate?

Modern contact centers aim to have an occupancy rate between 85% and 95%, depending on the efficiency of your center and the service level set. In other channels, such as email or chat, occupancy can be set much higher.



Job Sheet: 17

How to Calculate Contact Center Utilization

Specification Sheet: 17

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Utilization**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#17 Utilization

What is Utilization?

Utilization measures how much of an agent's paid time is spent on the contact center floor, handling contacts and waiting for them to arrive. If an advisor has a utilization rate of 75%, that means they spend three-quarters of their time attempting to assist with customer activity. The remaining 25% of the time, the advisor takes part in shrinkage activities. These include paid breaks, restroom visits, and coaching sessions. Lateness is another classic example.

Why is Utilization Important?

Typically, there are two reasons why contact centers calculate utilization:

1. To manage costs and make sure agents spend the majority of their paid time doing their primary job. Many contact centers may also consider utilization an indicator of agent productivity.
2. To inform shrinkage calculations, which are crucial for effective scheduling

How to Calculate Utilization:

Utilization Formula:

$$\text{Utilizations (\%)} = \text{Total Logged-in Time} \div \text{Total Shift Time} \times 100.$$

To highlight how this formula works, consider the following four-hour (240 minutes) shift.



While the contact center pays the agent for 240 minutes of work, they only spend 180 minutes (120+60) logged-in, waiting for contacts, and then answering them. Plugging these two figures into the equation above, the contact center may calculate utilization as follows: $(180 \text{ minutes} / 240 \text{ minutes}) \times 100 = 75\%$.

How to Get Data

Below is a practical example of using this formula, which includes the data from a team of five contact center agents, as displayed in the following table: (All the data included in this table can be found in the contact center's ACD system)

Agents	Scheduled Shift	Total Paid Time	Total Handling Time	Total Available Time	Total Logged-in Time
Agent 1	9:00am – 5:30pm	510 mins	335 mins	67 mins	402 mins
Agent 2	9:00am – 5:30pm	510 mins	346 mins	60 mins	406 mins
Agent 3	9:00am – 5:30pm	510 mins	351 mins	62 mins	413 mins
Agent 4	9:00am – 5:30pm	510 mins	329 mins	59 mins	388 mins
Agent 5	1:30pm – 5:30pm	240 mins	162 mins	28 mins	190 mins
Cumulative		2,280 mins			1,799 mins

Agent Utilization Calculator	Total Logged-in Time = (In minutes)	1799
	Total paid time = (In minutes)	2280
	Utilisation Rate (%) = $\frac{1,799}{2,280} \times 100 = 79.0\%$	
	Utilization Rate	79%

While utilization rates also typically fall between the 80-85% range as standard.



Job Sheet: 18

How to Calculate Contact Center Shrinkage

Specification Sheet: 18

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- Any Version of Spreadsheet
- Online tools

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Shrinkage**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#18 Shrinkage

What is Shrinkage?

Shrinkage is the amount of paid time that an employee is not available to do productive work, such as answer phone calls, despite being scheduled to work.

Why is Shrinkage Important?

Understanding shrinkage percentage as a call centre key performance indicator (KPI), and knowing how to calculate and manage it can give you an edge in improving customer interactions, average handle time, service level, and your own bottom line.

Call centres that consider shrinkage as a major workforce management (WFM) indicator when doing hiring and scheduling tend to meet a higher service level at a lower cost.

How to Calculate Shrinkage:

$$\text{Shrinkage (\%)} = (\text{Total Hours of External Shrinkage} + \text{Total Hours of Internal Shrinkage}) \div \text{Total Hours Available} \times 100$$

Get Data & Contact Centre Shrinkage Calculator:

	Based on	Working days per year		Working hours per week	
		260		37.5	
S h r i n k a g e c a l c u l a t o r	External Shrinkage	Hours per week	Days per year	Shrinkage Days	Percentage
	Annual Leave		24	24.0	9.2%
	Public holidays		8	8.0	3.1%
	Sickness		8	8.0	3.1%
	Absenteeism/ Lateness	1		1.4	0.5%
	Internal Shrinkage	Hours per week	Days per year	Shrinkage Days	Percentage
	Training		5	5.0	1.9%
	Coaching	5		6.9	2.7%
	Quality Sessions	2		2.8	1.1%
	Team meetings	4		5.5	2.1%
	One to ones	1		1.4	0.5%
	Paid Breaks	5		6.9	2.7%
	Toilet breaks	2.5		3.5	1.3%
	System problems	1		1.4	0.5%
	Other activities	7		9.7	3.7%
					Shrinkage Days
Total				84.5	32.5%

A shrinkage level of 30-35% is average for call centers.

Shrinkage Percentage and Workforce Management

There are many factors that can cause shrinkage, including some hidden ones that are not so obvious, as well as some that are beyond your control, and shrinkage percentage has to be taken into account when scheduling the number of agents needed to handle incoming call volume.



Job Sheet: 19

How to Calculate Contact Center Service Level

Specification Sheet: 19

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- **Any Version of Spreadsheet**
- **Online tools**

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Service Level**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#19 Service Level

What is Service Level?

The most basic definition of a service level is: **a measurable number of services provided to a customer within a given time period.**

In the context of call center performance metrics, this is often employed to measure the percentage of incoming calls that agents answer live during a set amount of time.

Why is Service Level Important?

Providing key metrics and clear numbers is primitive in any industry, and it becomes particularly challenging in the field of call centers. This is why managers have developed a number of techniques to quantify results and improve efficiency over the years. One of these methods is Call Center Service Levels. Service level is important for several reasons:

First, it helps to ensure that customers are not left waiting too long, which can lead to frustration and a negative experience with the contact center. When customers receive prompt and efficient service, they are more likely to have a positive perception of the organization and its brand.

Second, service level can impact the overall efficiency of the contact center. By setting a clear goal for the percentage of calls to be answered within a certain time frame, contact center managers can help their teams to prioritize tasks and manage their workload more effectively.

Finally, service level can provide important insights into the overall performance of the contact center. By tracking service level over time, managers can identify trends and make adjustments to staffing levels, processes, and technologies to optimize performance and meet the evolving needs of their customers.

How to Calculate Service Level:

Unfortunately, calculating call center service levels is a highly contentious issue. This is because the rate can easily be manipulated depending on the formula employed to calculate it. In the following examples, we will look at 5 different ways to calculate service levels and see how they offer different results.

1st Formula:

Service level = Number of calls answered in the time period / numbers of calls answered X 100%

The simplest and widely used formula is the same as mentioned above. However, you should take note that this formula does not take the number of abandoned calls into consideration.

2nd Formula

Service level = Calls answered in time period + calls abandoned in time limit / total calls answered + total calls abandoned X 100%

This formula takes the answered and abandoned calls into consideration for calculation. The calls abandoned within the threshold is deemed as positive

3rd Formula

Service level = Total calls answered in time limit / total calls answered + total calls abandoned X 100%

In contrast to the 2nd formula, this one considers the abandoned calls as negative.

4th Formula

Service level = Total calls answered in time period / total calls answered + total calls abandoned after time period X 100%

This formula ignores the number of calls abandoned within the threshold. The calls abandoned after the set time period are considered to affect the result.

5th Formula

Service level = Total calls answered within time period + calls abandoned within a shorter time than time limit / total calls answered + total calls abandoned X 100%

This formula includes the short calls. For example, the number of calls abandoned within 5 seconds as mentioned in the data.

Sample Data	Let's understand how to calculate service level. Also, look at other formulas used in the industry of Call Center.	
	Total calls answered =	1000
	Total calls abandoned =	60
	Total call answered within 20 seconds =	860
	Total calls abandoned within 20 seconds =	20
	Total calls abandoned after 20 seconds =	40
	Total calls abandoned within 5 seconds =	10

Service Level Calculator	1st Formula: Service Level =	$((860)/1000)*100\% = 86\%$
	The service level rate of 86% . While this looks good, But this formula ignores calls that abandon. Clearly this is NOT an accurate reflection of what is going on in the center.	
	2nd Formula: Service Level =	$(860+20)/(1000+60)*100\% = 83\%$
	The service level rate of 83% . This calculation takes all calls into consideration; however, calls that abandoned within your service level threshold count positively, meaning they help increase your service level percentage.	
	3rd Formula: Service Level =	$((860)/(1000+60)) *100\%= 81\%$
	The service level rate of 81% . Here you are given –credit” for all the calls you answered within your service level threshold and all calls that abandon will affect service level negatively, regardless of when they abandon	
	4th Formula: Service Level =	$((860)/(1000+40))*100\% = 83\%$
	The service level rate of 83% . Here calls that abandon after the threshold affect service level negatively. Call that abandon before the threshold do not affect service level.	
5th Formula: Service Level =	$((860+10)/(1000+60))*100\%= 82\%$	
The service level rate of 82% . This formula uses a threshold to account for –short calls.” For example, if your threshold is 20 seconds, here you would say that calls that abandon before that time will count positively towards service level.		

What is the Industry Standard Service Level?
<i>we found that the industry standard service levels for the following channels are:</i>
The Phone: The Industry Average Remains at 80% of Calls Being Answered Within 20 Seconds
Email: The Industry Average Is to Answer 100% of Emails in 24 Hours
Live Chat: The Industry Average Is to Answer 80% of Chats in 20 Seconds
Social Media: The Industry Average Is Difficult to Define

As we've seen, Call Center Service Levels can be confusing, which is why it is important to ensure they are measured through the right method. As is often the case with call center data, this is an area where advancements in software technology, such as **speech analytics** and **customer engagement analytics**, can drastically help managers get a clearer picture of agent performance, as well as the overall performance of the call center.

A final point to note is that if you are working with clients who require Call Center Service Levels, your formulas should be made transparent with everyone in order to be understood. This point is usually defined during a contract between the call center and the client, and as a reasonable solution, most of them will include a clause to accept 10% variance between the results.



Job Sheet: 20

How do you measure Absenteeism

Specification Sheet: 20

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- Any Version of Spreadsheet / Online tools
- Formula

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Absenteeism**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#20. Absenteeism

What is Absenteeism?

Absenteeism is the term for chronic or habitual workplace absence that is unplanned and unannounced. Absenteeism also includes partial absences like lateness, early departures, and even extended lunches. Absenteeism is the percentage of unauthorized time that members of the contact center team are absent from the floor. It is also known as **–absence rate**".

Why is Absenteeism Important?

It's important to differentiate between absenteeism and other forms of absence. Every employee misses work occasionally, but absenteeism has particularly disruptive effects:

It's more likely to occur unannounced.

It undermines trust between management and the employee (and among employees themselves).

It's usually an indicator that fundamental change is needed to make sure employees are engaged at work.

Unlike legitimate absences due to medical conditions or emergencies, absenteeism isn't a legitimate absence and is therefore unlikely to be excused.

The Absenteeism formula is as follows:

Absenteeism Rate = (Average # of Employees X Missed Workdays) / (Average # of Employees X Total Workdays)

How to Get Data

To calculate the absenteeism rate for your business during October (2022):

1. First, find the average number of employees. At the beginning of October, you had seven employees. At the end of the month, you had nine. Your average number of employees is 8 $([9 + 7] / 2)$.
2. Secondly, calculate your total workdays in the period. Your business is open Monday – Friday. There were no holidays in October. Your total number of workdays is 23.
3. Next, find the number of workdays lost to absenteeism. Workdays are eight hours long in your business. One employee missed one day and another employee missed one day. In total, your employees were absent for two full days. Another employee was gone for an additional four hours. First, divide the four-hour day by eight hours to get 0.5. Then, add 0.5 and 2 to get a total of 2.5
4. Plug your numbers into the absenteeism rate formula:

Absenteeism Calculator	Average # of Employees = (in Person)	8
	Missed Workdays=	2.5
	Your total number of workdays =	23
	the absenteeism rate formula=	$(8 \times 2.5) / (8 \times 23)$
	Absenteeism rate (%)	11%

The lower your absenteeism rate, the better. Absenteeism rates can vary by industry. As a general rule of thumb, you want to avoid having an absenteeism rate in double digits.

Before you roll your eyes at yet another performance metric to track, consider the KPIs directly affected by absenteeism:

Customer satisfaction (CSat)

First call resolution (FCR)

Abandonment rate

Agent satisfaction and attrition



Job Sheet: 21

How do you measure Schedule Adherence

Specification Sheet: 21

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- Any Version of Spreadsheet / Online tools
- Formula

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Schedule Adherence**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#21. Schedule Adherence

What is Schedule Adherence?

Call center schedule adherence is the amount of time agents spend sticking to their schedule. The schedule includes call time, wrap-ups, meetings, and training. But the concept is more complex than call center agents simply being at work or not. Schedule adherence, by definition, is a workforce management metric, contact center managers can use to track an employee's ability to stick to their schedule. To improve efficiency, contact centers focus on two main types of schedule adherence:

Real-time adherence: comparing how an agent is currently spending their time vs. their schedule.

Historical adherence: Managers pull adherence reports to compare the time an employee spends conducting call center activities vs. the time spent on less productive activities.

Why is Schedule Adherence Important?

It's important to have a proven, efficient process for tracking schedule adherence because it's a vital metric to your contact center's performance. A failure to control schedule adherence can adversely impact your customer experience and the delivery of your SLAs.

An example of schedule adherence might include pulling historical adherence reports if you begin to see customer satisfaction or SLA deliverables slipping. Managers can then compare these reports to a benchmark schedule adherence figure to decide if new protocols need to be put in place to maximize the productivity of customer service representatives.

The Schedule Adherence formula is as follows:

Adherence Rate = 100 X (Total scheduled time – Time off schedule) / Total scheduled time

How to Get Data

Let's say an agent is scheduled for 480 minutes of work (8 hours) in a workday. The agent follows the schedule, except they take too long handling a call before a break. They spend an extra ten minutes working when their break is scheduled and another ten minutes on break when they are scheduled to work. That means the agent was off-schedule for a total of 20 minutes. The calculation would be:

Schedule Adherence Calculator	Total scheduled time = (in Hours)	480
	Time off schedule =	20
	the Schedule Adherence formula =	$100 \times (480 - 20) / 480$
	Schedule Adherence rate (%)	96%

Schedule adherence is measured as a percentage, with the maximum being 100%. However, if employees were to achieve a 100% schedule adherence rate, this would mean they were constantly on their phones addressing customer requests. While the numbers might look good in the short term, this would eventually lead to employee burnout and cause drastic decreases in productivity later down the line. Contact center employees are only human. While a schedule adherence rate of 100% would be nice, this isn't possible in the real world.

Efficient call centers decide on a "target" schedule adherence rate. Managers should make all call center representatives aware of their target, which is typically a schedule adherence rate of just under 100% for a productive call center. Historically, contact centers have found 90% to be a good target number.



Job Sheet: 22

How do you measure Attrition

Specification Sheet: 22

To complete the below task, you will need the following tools:

- Any Version of Spreadsheet / Online tools
- Formula

Method of Preparation:

To Calculate **Attrition**, first we need to follow the below steps:

#22. Attrition

What is Attrition?

Attrition is the rate at which members of staff leave the workforce over a given period of time. It is also known as 'employee turnover', or 'employee churn'. The term "attrition" refers to the rate at which employees of an organization leave the workforce over a given period of time. In other words, it can be used by organizations to assess their employee retention rate and analyze it to see if there is an alarming trend. The attrition rate is also known as employee churn rate or employee turnover.

Why is Attrition Important?

The danger with attrition is that it becomes just another percentage that managers occasionally pass their eyes over. Yet, in terms of real value, high attrition represents huge costs to organisations. There are high costs in recruiting and training new staff; these are the direct costs of attrition.

Employee turnover can have a negative impact on an organisation's performance. By understanding the reasons behind staff turnover, employers can devise initiatives that reduce turnover and increase employee retention.

The Attrition formula is as follows:

$$\text{Attrition Rate} = \frac{\text{No. of Employees that Left Workforce}}{\text{Average No. of Employees}}$$

How to Get Data

1. Count how many agents quit in the past year.
2. Divide the number of attritions (agents that quit) by the average number of employees.
3. Multiply the result by 100 to get a percentage.

Attrition Calculator	Agents that quit in 2022:	50
	Average number of employees:	300
	Attrition Rate = $100 \times (\frac{\text{\# of Attritions}}{\text{Average \# of Employees}})$	100 (50/300)
	Attrition Rate (%)	16.70%

What Is the Industry Standard of Call Center Attrition Rate?

Historically, call center attrition rates have always been high due to the repetitive and monotonous nature of the work, the challenge of having to handle too many calls, and low employee engagement. In general, the average annual turnover rate for call centers has remained relatively stable over the past years, around 30-45 percent, above the average for all other occupations.

Managing call center attrition is a challenge; however, if you take steps to empower and motivate your agents and leverage technology to optimize engagement, you'll be well positioned to maintain a stable, and satisfied, workforce. Now more than ever, as the customer service landscape is changing, it's important to embrace change and stay ahead of the curve, augmenting both customer and employee experience while increasing call center efficiency and success rates.



Job Sheet: 23 to 26

#23 How do you measure **Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)**

#24 How do you measure **Upsell Ratio**

#25 How do you measure **Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)**

#26 How do you measure **Redemption Rate**

#23. Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)

What is RPR?

Your repeat purchase rate is the percentage of customers who have returned to you for multiple purchases. While a repeat purchase doesn't necessarily indicate loyalty, it's easier to build loyalty in a repeat customer.

How to Get Data

To calculate your RPR, divide the number of customers who made a repeat purchase in a given timeframe by your total number of customers in that same timeframe.

Calculator	Numbers of customers of last quarter	235
	Total amount of customers	1234
	RPR Score	0.19

#24. Upsell Ratio

What is Upsell Ratio?

Upsell ratio is similar to repeat purchase rate, but involves different products or offerings. To measure it, divide your customers who bought more than one type of product by those who only bought one in a given time.

How to Get Data

Businesses would do well to focus on upselling over new acquisitions. As the probability of selling to a new prospect is 5-20% and to an existing customer is 60-70%.

Calculator	Customers who bought more than 1 type of products of last quarter	121
	Customers who bought 1 type of products of last quarter	435
	Upsell Ratio	0.28

#25. Customer Loyalty Index (CLI)

What is CLI?

Customer loyalty index is a tool that can help you track customer loyalty over time. It involves a survey with three questions aimed at gauging NPS, repurchases, and upselling:

How to Get Data

Customers answer on a scale of 1 through 6, where 1 means "very likely" and 6 means "not likely."

To calculate CLI, find the average of all three scores. Remember that while measuring intent isn't the most reliable and actionable, you can still paint a useful picture of customer loyalty if you send out the survey regularly over time.

#26. Redemption Rate

What is Redemption Rate?

Redemption rate can give you an idea of how loyal your customer loyalty program members actually are. A good loyalty program generates customer loyalty by making customers feel good about earning points and cashing in on rewards. The redemption rate can help quantify the success of your customer loyalty strategies.

How to Get Data

To find redemption rate, divide the total number of points or coupons that have been redeemed by the total points or coupons issued.

Calculator	Total points or coupons that have been redeemed	2290
	Total points or coupons issued	12000
	Redemption rate	19%

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